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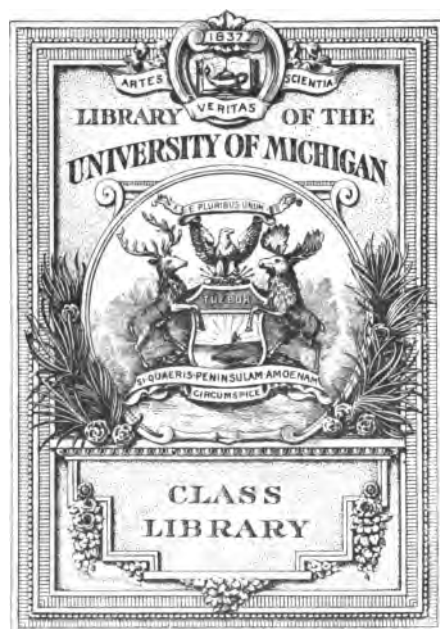
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# PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

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## **ORGANIZED LABOR**



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# Organized Labor

ITS PROBLEMS AND  
HOW TO MEET THEM

BY

A. J. PORTENAR

*New York*

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## **TO ORGANIZED LABOR**

Reflecting every human frailty;  
Reflecting every human virtue;  
Broad, noble, petty, selfish;  
Liberal, generous, tyrannical, arrogant;  
Working injustice while crying for justice;  
Working for justice while suffering injustice;  
More good than evil, more sinned against  
than sinning;

This book is dedicated in the hope that it  
may be of service.



## **PREFACE**

**Organized labor's to-morrow is in the making to-day. Certainly, this proposition is axiomatic in relation to all men and all institutions; but there come times when the fact is obtrusively evident. An hour for definite decision between courses diametrically opposed is an hour whose influence may determine the events of a century or a millennium.**

**Such a crisis is imminent in the history of organized labor. Two contradictory theories upon which to mold its future present themselves and there can be no compromise between them. Being entirely convinced of the wisdom of one of these courses of action, and hence necessarily entirely opposed to the adoption of the other, I am impelled to strive with all my power to induce my fellow workmen to set their feet upon that path which secures to them in their days reasonable enjoyment of the good in life, and at the same time leads them onward to the making of progressively better conditions for their posterity. It is a choice between light and life as against darkness and death, and I am for light and life.**

**A word concerning a matter which touches me closely. Having been informed that the settled policy of the publisher precludes the use of the Allied Printing Trades label upon books published by it, I have requested and obtained the permission of the Macmillan Company to announce that this book was manufactured under union conditions.**

**Brooklyn, Sept. 24, 1912.      A. J. PORTENAR.**



## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. WHAT SHALL WE DO?.....	2
II. A GLANCE BACKWARD.....	4
III. SYNDICALISM.....	14
IV. BY WAY OF EXPLANATION.....	28
V. ORGANIZATION BY INDUSTRY.....	33
VI. ARBITRATION.....	42
VII. THE STRIKE.....	51
VIII. INSURANCE BENEFITS.....	55
IX. THE APPRENTICE.....	76
X. CO-OPERATIVE TRADING (with an Added Feature).....	84
XI. RELATED THINGS.....	103
XII. SUMMARY.....	119



## ORGANIZED LABOR: ITS PROBLEMS AND HOW TO MEET THEM

### I. WHAT SHALL WE DO?

**W**HEN the McNamaras confessed, press, pulpit, and platform poured out such a volume of admonition to organized labor that if the value of advice could be measured by its quantity, the question, What shall we do? would be unnecessary. Unfortunately for us, copious as counsel has been, it did not even touch upon our problem. Some of it was well intentioned; but not all. There was malice in it, with little pains taken for its concealment; there was exultation in it, for that we had sinned and been found out; there was patronizing forgiveness in it, if we would go and sin no more. But that which was conspicuously lacking in most of it was the sympathetic consideration of underlying causes, and the means whereby those causes could be removed or

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

so minified that their terrible fruits would ripen no more. And it did not tell us *what* to do.

Lincoln Steffens endeavored to find out what had happened and what had made it happen; a hard task. And then he sought to prove it to the satisfaction of the complacent; which was infinitely harder. I think he went searching for the Holy Grail. But he did not tell us specifically what to do.

While public attention was still focused upon Judge Bordwell's court in Los Angeles a delegation went to Washington (and some of the salt of the earth which has not lost its savor was in that delegation). They presented a petition to the President asking for the appointment of a commission to look into the industrial problem from every angle. Whereby they most pertinently showed officialdom what to do. President Taft has since acted upon that suggestion. But their action provided no answer to the question, What shall *we* do?

One man has sounded the true note. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, on December 24, 1911, speaking in his Free Synagogue, said: "Let it not be imagined that the Los Angeles outrages are the final condemnation of organized labor, or that this is the time to deal a crushing blow to the

## WHAT SHALL WE DO ?

body of workingmen in the land, who must more than ever before, in the words of Mazzini, *organize*, and ORGANIZE, and ORGANIZE !”

So far as a generalization may serve, this advice cannot be improved upon. But there remain to be worked out the details of its application. It does not mean proselytism alone. The missionary spirit has always been strong in trades unionism, and there need be no doubt that this duty will be thoroughly performed. But there is much likelihood that the wider significance of organization will remain unnoticed, and the intensive cultivation of its possibilities remain neglected, as has been the case in the past. In other words, we gather an army, and then fail to provide it with equipment and drill.

## II. A GLANCE BACKWARD

Maybe we can tell better what to do if we consider what we have done, and why. The trade union came into being because it was needed; because the helpless individual found in concerted action with other individuals his best, if not his only means of resistance to the arbitrary exercise of power, to injustice, to cruelty. It was a hard fight. Wealth, and the merciless power of wealth; the statute law, forbidding workmen to co-operate for the purpose of increasing wages, and fixing maxima, with its interpreters zealous for its rigorous enforcement; legislative bodies deaf to the cries of those who were denied the privilege of a voice in the selection of their members; and the broken-spirited timidity of those in whose behalf the union was created; these were the forces to be contended with and overcome. Incredible hardships and misery were the burnt offerings laid upon the altar of its upbuilding, and these being given, the failure of the principle was impossible.

## A GLANCE BACKWARD

Thus trade unionism was born. Its weapon was the strike. The employer who cared nothing for the loss of the services of one or a few, regarded with apprehension the cessation of work by all his employees. Later, and of less potency, came the boycott and the label. So, losing a battle here and winning a battle there, unionism became a powerful lever for the bettering of the condition of the working masses. The tide of war was in its favor.

But the evident advantages of organization and combination could not be monopolized by one party. It is not necessary to this argument to trace in detail the forms of unionism adopted by employers, for their development is proceeding under our very eyes. It is sufficient to say that at this day the associations of employers are recovering some of the power lost by individual employers during the evolution of the unions of employees, and so long as the contest continues to be waged on the lines measurably successful in the past, so long will the wealthier, more compact, and (in everything but numbers) more powerful organization continue to regain what it had formerly lost. The tide of war has set the other way.

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

That changes in the policy and methods of trade unionism are essential to the maintenance of its influence as a factor in industrial development is conceded by all unionists who have given thought to the matter, but there is no such unanimity in conclusions as to what these changes ought to be. Temperament has much to do in shaping the opinions of individuals, and circumstances will undoubtedly exert powerful if not controlling influence over the tendencies of the mass. The most distinctive departure from traditional methods that is being advocated is at the same time the most extreme. What is known in Europe as syndicalism, but which has been more widely referred to in this country as "direct action," has been thrust upon our attention in such a manner and by such men as to make it evident that the first and most important decision that trades unionists will have to make will be the acceptance or rejection of the aim and program of syndicalism. There are many who conceive syndicalism to be merely a gospel of violence, and they have been led to that belief by the mistaken characterization of newspapers when commenting on the McNamara affair. But it is much more than that. It is my intention to give a brief

## A GLANCE BACKWARD

review of the inception and history of that movement, but before doing so it is pertinent to consider in our survey what has caused incidental violence in strikes, and what has come of it.

The picket line is usually the point of contact at which antagonistic forces clash; and little wonder is it that it should be so. But let us see how the resort to violence has worked out for us, from the standpoint of material advantage. Not because that is the only or the highest standpoint, but because that is the view upon which its advocates depend for justification.

A bitter grievance of organized labor for many years has been the issuance of injunction orders in labor disputes. The first writs of this character were in restraint only of acts of violence, and were defended as being necessary because of violence or the probability of violence. The value of the writ to one of the parties was quickly recognized, and its scope was broadened, until now it is a common practice of the courts to forbid us the exercise of ordinary natural rights. Without hesitation, judges enjoin us from leaving employment, from inducing others to enter or leave employment, from paying assessments for the

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

maintenance of fellow members on strike; they order us to refrain from using public thoroughfares or speaking to other persons, particularly employees of a struck shop. And the alleged justification for these invasions of constitutional rights is now, as for the earlier and more limited writs, the prevention of violence. Meanwhile, only too often, we ourselves have lent color to the claim usually made by petitioners, that the restraining order is essential to the conduct of their business and the safety of their employees. And when the injunction is issued, its effect is far greater than its language really warrants, for to many uneducated men it is an instrument full of vague terrors, and serves excellently to impress them with an indefinable but none the less real feeling that the law is actively working against them, with the consequent weakening of their confidence of victory. Has violence served us when we consider this consequence?

Violence begets violence. The policeman has no discretion when blows are struck or hard names called. It is true, he is sometimes extremely officious in the performance of his duty, but it is also true that at least as often he is inclined to sympathize with the strikers. Extra labor thrown

## A GLANCE BACKWARD

on him leads to exasperation, and sooner or later he uses his club, not only because he is ordered to, but because he wants to. If the job is too big for the police, out come the militia, frequently officered by men implacably opposed to labor unions; and occasionally even regular troops. *Their* violence, no matter to what lengths it may go, has the sanction of law. Do we evince much wisdom when we by violence thus bring upon ourselves the violent resources of the state?

But worse than all other consequences, violence is the excuse for arming thugs, private detectives and professional strikebreakers, ostensibly for protection against us, frequently for active aggression upon us. And then, when the union man is shot or clubbed, the murderous, irresponsible assailant claims self-defense, and has a *prima facie* case based on the violence so often indulged in by our people, but which may be entirely absent from a particular incident. Has any advantage accrued to us in this regard from violence?

I know and appreciate the provocations. I know how the efforts and sacrifices of union men fix a standard upon which are based the compensation and working conditions of those whose narrow

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

selfishness is the chief factor in rendering those efforts and sacrifices useless; who are dragging us down at the very time we are trying to pull them up. I have felt the instinctive impulse to treat them as the savage treats his enemies. But I cannot know the motives which actuate them, nor the necessities that compel them, nor can I bring them to see eye to eye with me, if my approach is a menace and my argument a club.

Can a picket line be peacefully maintained and at the same time successfully conducted? I know it can, for I have had my share of such work, done in that way, and well done. Men have been met going to and from their work in struck shops, have been reasoned with, walking alongside of them for a block or two, then parted from with a good night or good morning. Met again the next day; and again, and still again. At first the policeman is suspicious and the "rat" apprehensive. But it soon becomes apparent that he need not fear even the "constructive assault" of a detaining hand placed on his coat sleeve. He becomes accustomed to having some one walk a couple of blocks with him night and morning. He is invited in somewhere, if he

## A GLANCE BACKWARD

is willing to go, and the matter is talked over around a table with something on it. Think of him as a "scab" if you will, but your business is to get him out of that shop, and this way is far more efficacious than "arf a brick."

So much for incidental violence, which subsides when the particular difficulty which has given rise to it has been adjusted. But what of a program of deliberate and continued violence? It is not necessary to point out the hideousness of such crimes as that of Los Angeles. Even those who resort to them make no attempt at ethical justification. There is no defense except that the end justifies the means, and the means are efficient for securing the end. Have such means been efficient? Let the unhappy position of organized labor when the McNamara confessions startled the world furnish the answer. A program like theirs can never secure a better test of its effectiveness and ultimate value to the cause it professes to serve than was given it in the past five years, with the confession of the McNamaras for its culmination, and the bitter humiliation and retardation of organized labor for its result.

I know and appreciate the dejection that comes with the conviction that the giant unions of

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

capital are not at all or only in small degree vulnerable by the weapons hitherto depended on; that their vast resources enable them to carry out the coldly deliberate intention to destroy or make impotent the associations of employees. Again I say, the savage instinct is comprehensible to me; and again, more emphatically than before, I say that to indulge it is absolutely fatal.

I would not wish to be misunderstood in saying this. I would not wish the union man who may read this to suppose me to mean that never, under any circumstances, should there be in his mind the thought of violent resistance to aggression. For instance, had I been in Lawrence and concerned in the textile strike, I would a thousand times sooner fight against the unlawful attempt to prevent the sending forth of the children than against the lawful entry of scabs into the mills. The idea of armed rebellion enters my mind more readily in connection with political than industrial affairs, because I believe that our industrial condition will not be hopeless until our political rights are destroyed. In an age and in a country where education and the franchise are the guaranteed privileges of the humblest, I have

## A GLANCE BACKWARD

abounding faith that the school book and the ballot will make unnecessary the rifle and the bomb. But should my faith be not well founded, should these means be insufficient, then I prefer the thought of Cromwell's Ironsides to the Jacquerie. So much by way of explanation. But of rioting on the picket line and dynamite explosions on non-union jobs, I would not modify one word that I have written.

Hence the first answer to the question, What shall we do? is a negative. We shall not resort to open or furtive violence. Those to whom an ethical reason is sufficient need not be urged to refrain from it. Those who see in it a means of advancement should be satisfied that the best to be hoped from it is temporary gain, certain to be followed by punishment for the guilty and disaster for the movement. The two reasons together should control us all.

### III. SYNDICALISM

A word may convey an idea as a lightning flash illumines a scene; yet to define the word may be as difficult as to explain the genesis of the lightning. Syndicalism is not defined when you call it trades unionism, yet it is an evolution of trades unionism; neither is it defined when you call it Socialism, yet it certainly is a modification of Socialism. It is not anarchy, but in some of its aspects it seems closely akin to anarchy. Syndicalism proclaims for its objective the collective ownership of the means of production, which is the familiar doctrine of state socialism; yet syndicalism is different from state socialism, and hostile to it, (so much so, indeed, that the line of fissure, already clearly discernible, will almost certainly result in a separation of irreconcilable elements). The propaganda of socialism (I use the term in the sense in which it is currently understood) is wholly political. It expects to realize its ideals through the eventual capture of the machinery of government, and

## SYNDICALISM

while many of its adherents are trade unionists, it regards the trade union as more or less of an obstacle to its development. Syndicalism, on the contrary, cares nothing for political success. It makes no attempt to secure amelioration of industrial conditions through the law-making power, and does not seek representation in law-making bodies. Syndicalism ignores the state as now organized, and expects to destroy both the industrial and political organizations at the same time and by the same means—by what it calls direct action. Socialism seeks to influence the action of trades unionists as voters; syndicalism endeavors to control the trade union as an industrial group. The theory of syndicalism is to make private ownership of the utilities of production impossible by making it entirely unprofitable. Its method of reaching this result is by the general strike, which means cessation of work by the entire industrial population and the complete immobility of all the instruments of production. The general strike would make the continuance of private ownership impossible because it would make that ownership useless. Untilled farms, idle machinery, empty factories, immobile transportation facilities—all these pro-

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

duce no profits and are valueless to their nominal owners. The general strike would make the existing government obsolete because it would make it powerless. Government might enact statutes, but it could not enforce them; it would have soldiers, but it could not feed them, clothe them or move them. The workers would lay down their tools as employees; when they picked them up again it would be as owners, and the social revolution would be accomplished.

The leaders of the syndicalist movement are well aware that the general strike is only a theory. But with the general strike as its ultimate object, syndicalism gives practical effect to its conceptions by tactics designed to continuously decrease the margin of profit accruing to the private owner of an industry. Wage increases are constantly sought because no wage is held to be a just one which is less than 100 per cent. of the income of the industry. Syndicalism will not be a party to agreements for the adoption of wage scales for a definite time, for it must be free to strike at any time. It is not so important whether a strike succeeds or fails of its immediate object. Strikes cause loss and decrease profits. If the strike is won it is the prelude to another; if the strike is

## SYNDICALISM

lost it is the prelude to another. And there is always the possibility that any strike may spread from group to group until the general strike is accomplished by a series of lesser strikes.

There remains in the armorium of the syndicalist one other terrible weapon. At work inside the mill or factory he is more to be dreaded than on strike outside. Sabotage will even more reduce the profit-making power of the industry than the interruptions caused by strikes. Possibly some readers do not know the meaning of the word; therefore an explanation is permissible. It is related that on an occasion a French workman, in a fit of anger, took off his *sabot* or wooden shoe and threw it into the midst of some machinery. He was dumfounded at the devastation he had caused. The idea of doing injury to machinery or product found many applications, and the practice was given the name of sabotage. So much for the legend. But in "The Romance of Words," by Ernest Weekley, its derivation is given as from the verb *saboter*, to "skimp work." The *sabot* (wooden shoe) has, it seems, a secondary meaning in popular speech, as referring to any kind of an inferior article; hence *saboter*; hence *sabotage*. The ways in which sabotage can be

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

applied are limited only by the ingenuity of those who apply it. Emery powder can get into machinery; alum may find its way into flour; woolen or cotton goods may be made defective in the weaving; many things may happen in the preparation of goods for shipment, and during transportation.

*Syndicats ouvriers* (Workingmen syndicates) is the French equivalent for trades unions. This use of the word syndicate is somewhat unfamiliar to our ears, but it is nearly enough synonymous with the word "association" to convey a self-evident meaning. French trades unions of the present are divided into two classes, known respectively as *syndicats rouges* (those which have adopted the revolutionary program), and *syndicats jaunes* (those which restrict their efforts at improvement within constitutional limits).

In more or less vague form the idea of a general strike had been presented in continental Europe from time to time for many years, but its adoption as the definite policy of an organized body appears to date from 1894. In that year there was held at Nantes a joint congress of French trades unionists and socialists at which, by a vote of 65 to 37, with 9 abstentions, the general strike was

## SYNDICALISM

adopted as a policy in preference to political agitation. At Limoges, in 1895, an association was formed by representatives of those trades unions which in the previous year had voted affirmatively at the congress of Nantes. This association assumed the title of Confédération Générale du Travail (since commonly known as the C. G. T.), and it was as a noun descriptive of the policy of this body that the word *syndicalisme* came into use. The C. G. T. made but little progress until 1902. From that date, however, it has exercised a continually increasing influence in industrial disputes, until now it is a factor of considerable importance. An approximate estimate is that one-third of French trades unions are affiliated with the C. G. T. (*syndicats rouges*), and the remaining two-thirds are of the *syndicats jaunes*. But any such estimate of comparative strength must be modified by a consideration of the forceful and determined spirit which actuates the smaller body. The C. G. T. is a fighting institution. Also there are no doubt aligned with it some unions which are impelled more by hope of immediate benefit than by self-sacrificing devotion to its principles; while at the same time there are unions classed as *syndicats*

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

*jaunes* whose allegiance is no more securely fixed. It is probable that any marked success of the C. G. T. would attract many of the *syndicats jaunes*, while a decisive reverse would mean the detachment of some unions now enrolled as *syndicats rouges*.

The C. G. T. in 1909 declared a general strike in aid of the strike of the postal and telegraph employees, and in 1910 made a similar declaration in favor of the association of railway servants. In each case the response was limited, and the strikes were eventually settled. But it is not likely that the C. G. T. had any illusions as to the result, being well aware of its inability to enforce its order. But it discounts failure and is insensible to defeat. Its action was in accordance with the adopted system of syndicalism which has been stated by M. George Sorel (a French Socialist writer of distinction who has made himself its apologist and defender) as follows: "By means of methodical economic agitation—that is, by strikes systematically and incessantly repeated—to lead up to the general strike."

I have been at some pains to define syndicalism because it is here, in organized form, and energetically pushing its propaganda. The Industrial

## SYNDICALISM

Workers of the World (commonly referred to as the I. W. W.) is a prototype of the French C. G. T., and teaches identical objects and identical means for their attainment. Like the C. G. T., it comprises both trades unionists and socialists, and has enlisted the extremists in both movements. I am convinced that trades unionism in the United States will sooner or later reach a point where it will be compelled to definitely decide whether the road it shall take and the goal it shall seek shall or shall not be the road and the goal pointed out by the I. W. W. The question, What shall we do? will assume many phases and require many answers, but this decision is fundamental, and upon the choice we shall make between the mutually exclusive programs of uncompromising war and evolutionary development will depend the character of all the decisions that must follow.

I do not minimize the features of the program of syndicalism which are naturally attractive to trades unionists in general, nor those which will prove alluring to some among us who are even now unconscious syndicalists, although they may be unacquainted with the word. I have seen the printed opinions of some newspaper writers

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

on the subject to the effect that among the better paid and more thoroughly organized unions affiliated with the A. F. of L. the I. W. W. can make no headway, or can make none unless the A. F. of L. is continuously defeated in efforts to increase wage scales and better conditions. To this opinion I can only partially subscribe. It is true that here, as in France, syndicalism will gain many converts if it wins victories, and will find its ranks depleted if it meets reverses. But in large measure the choice will be a matter of temperament rather than of affiliation or of comparatively favorable conditions. Agreements fixing wage scales and schedules of hours for definite terms are customary in American industries. Agreements for the submission of disputes to arbitrating bodies variously constituted, while not so common, are also frequently made. But there is always an element which is opposed to entering into them for the same reason that actuates syndicalists in refusing to make any agreements, namely, they desire to be free to strike at any moment they may deem opportune; and this element, whenever and wherever it is in control of the governing machinery of its organizations, does not hesitate to break agree-

## SYNDICALISM

ments, whether they are for the arbitration of disputes or are intended to create a condition of stability in regard to wages and hours for a stated time. To minds thus constituted so much of syndicalist precept as denies the necessity or value of such agreements, declines to make them and repudiates them when made, will be extremely attractive, and will well serve the energetic organizers of the I. W. W. in their work.

Another proposal, and one which will appeal with greater force to a much larger number in the ranks of trades unionism, is the conception that workers should be organized on the basis of the industry rather than of the trade. Much advantage may accrue to the I. W. W. if those who oppose syndicalism should assume an attitude of hostility to this idea, which is the natural and evolutionary tendency of unionism.

Still another doctrine of the I. W. W. which has already been received with much favorable comment by union men, and deservedly so, is the declaration that the interests of those whose wages were the lowest and whose condition was the most pitiable should receive first and greatest consideration.

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

This is a policy as wise as it is generous, and embodies a well merited reproach to the strong unions which have thus far consistently neglected those who, through lack of organization, or because of the unskilled character of their employment, were unable to help themselves.

But after due allowance is made for what may be commendable in the policy and principles of syndicalism, there still confronts us, grim and terrible, its declaration of unceasing war; its program of strike, misery, destruction and death; its assumption that only through this valley of the shadow can we attain the sunlit mountains of peace and contentment. To quote M. Sorel again: "It is the only process by which society can be purged from the evils which now beset it, and, purified by the fire of revolution, can realize its loftiest ideal."

Reason and conscience declare it is not the only way. But it may be made to seem the only way. Two forces whose mutual antagonism is deadly are exerting pressure from opposite directions toward a common point. On the one hand there is the terrific energy, the intense single-mindedness and sincerity of syndicalism, which draws up plainly and presents powerfully an indictment

## SYNDICALISM

whose counts are vivid pictures of injustice, with effects varying in degree from ordinary hardship to degrading misery. On the other hand there is the brutal determination to abate not one jot of profitable injustice despite that misery. Those who fear syndicalism most and have most cause to fear it are nevertheless those who most assiduously give it life and growth. In temperament extremists of both classes are alike, and against both must we contend.

Consider the logical consequences of the "irritation" strike as a common feature of industrial life. With infinite difficulty, after many hard battles, some unions have secured recognition as responsible bodies with which agreements may be made for the establishment of stable conditions for definite periods. Some unions are still vainly demanding such recognition and still fighting for it. There can be no question that if peace and stability are necessary to the employer, they are equally necessary to the employee. By the use of the "irritation" strike to force concessions we deliberately destroy all hope of stability and steadiness in industry. Chronic uncertainty punctuated by periods of violent upheaval would become the ordinary conditions

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

of existence. And it should be remembered that employers might resort to the same tactics. The initiation of that sort of disturbance might be undertaken by them to exhaust our powers of endurance as readily as by us to exhaust theirs; in either case with results fatal to every gratification that brightens the lot of ordinary people. We may have plans we hope to carry out; what use to make plans without an hour's certainty of opportunity to earn the means necessary to their fulfillment? There may be pleasures to which we look forward with eagerness; what hope of pleasure in a life devoted to unending strife, with enforced truces taken only to recuperate from exhaustion. We may have duties, such as the education of children; what possibility of giving our children better opportunities than our own in a society so continually convulsed that it is doubtful if we can always give them bread?

Look now at the effects of sabotage as a common feature of industrial life. All the evils that follow in the train of the "irritation" strike would be intensified. Even the periods of truce compelled by exhaustion would be rendered more precarious. The knowledge on the part of the employer that he must protect himself against the destruction

## SYNDICALISM

of his product on its way through the factory and to the consumer would necessitate the creation of a numerous corps of spies, and this in its turn would breed a feeling of universal suspicion. Instead of good will and co-operation for common purposes, the always impending fear of treachery would be paralyzing, and the spies would undoubtedly be numerous enough and clever enough to make almost all intended actions futile. A further consequence would be that the damage done and the expense of guarding against such damage would be added to the cost of products, and would increase by so much the burden on ourselves as consumers.

And if through these two policies the conception of the general strike should ever be realized, it would not be war with which we would be confronted. War is too mild a term to describe such a state. Imagine *every* human activity in a condition of immobility. Then visualize if you can the demons that would be loose: Darkness, terror, famine, rapine, carnage, with pestilence to crown the cataclysm. Our world would be an inferno and we the damned souls in it.

No; that is not the road to redemption. There must be a *modus vivendi*—a way to live—while we work out our destiny, and we must find that way.

#### IV. BY WAY OF EXPLANATION

There is in surgery a process known as over-correction. If a bone or joint is deformed by inclining from a straight line to one side, the abnormality is sought to be cured by forcibly inclining the deformed member to the other side. Perhaps the principle of overcorrection has been applied in the foregoing chapters in the effort to discourage violence, and an impression created which may have tended to discourage aggressiveness. But the fact remains that organized labor must be militant. Those who talk of the interests of capital and labor as identical state only a half truth so long as the industrial organization of society remains as it is. Take any industry at all for an illustration. Employers and employees are mutually interested in creating as great a product as possible. The fruit of their labors forms a fund for the maintenance of the industry and of those engaged in it. But when the division of that fund is made, then their interests are diametrically opposed. The greater

## BY WAY OF EXPLANATION

the share of either party, the less will be that of the other. It is the function of the labor union to secure for the workers the largest possible share of that fund. To continue the effectiveness of the union for that function it has become necessary that we consider, What shall we do?

I have some suggestions to offer, none of them startling or dramatic, none of them wholly original. Sometimes an inventor makes a new combination of old ideas. Perhaps that is the utmost that I can claim. It is an axiom that humanity seeks to satisfy its desires along the line of least resistance. Along the line of least resistance I would guide organized labor if the power of imparting convictions is vouchsafed to my pen.

We have heretofore depended principally on one weapon, and many times have I heard its use defended, and a tendency to use less wasteful substitutes hotly condemned, on the ground that the strike! the strike! the strike! was the means by which our predecessors won the position we occupy, and was the only efficient weapon by which we could retain it. I have heard arbitration agreements denounced, because they limited the right to strike. I have heard officers abused

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

because they showed a disposition to compromise comparatively trifling matters, instead of immediately resorting to the strike, or adopting a tone that might easily lead to one; and I have seen shops lost by strikes that were avoidable.

The fact is, our problem has changed, and the tactics of the pioneers of unionism are not applicable to the conditions of to-day. The employers have learned unionism from us, and they have bettered the instruction. We must be pioneers again, and if we make full use of the resources at our command, we will find no difficulty in continuing the onward march, temporarily checked by adherence to outworn ideas.

Let me recall to the attention of the reader the following passage:

“But there is much likelihood that the wider significance of organization will remain unnoticed, and the intensive cultivation of its possibilities remain neglected, as has been the case in the past. In other words, we gather an army and then fail to provide it with equipment and drill.” (p. 3).

Organized labor has made itself a powerful force by an extremely limited application of the principle of co-operation. How plainly wisdom indicates that the course it should pursue is an

## BY WAY OF EXPLANATION

extension of the same principle. Our mistake hitherto has been that we have confined our concerted action solely to the narrow field of our interests in production. We have raised wages, reduced hours, and more or less bettered working conditions. In our hands we had and have an implement with which marvelous results have been accomplished, even though such limited use has been made of it; yet we have failed to grasp the fact, elemental and clearly perceptible, that the same implement is capable of producing results measurable only by the uses we make of it.

But it has seemed to be the tacit assumption that the trade union has no functions outside of the shop or outside of those things that directly pertain to the shop. The mistake of most of us has been to regard the matter of employment as a detached thing, unrelated to all the other incidents of daily life, instead of an integral part of that life. Every attempt to widen the field of co-operative action is bitterly opposed on the ground that the union should not depart from its proper sphere, which such minds conceive to be confined absolutely to the questions that may arise directly between themselves and employers. The force of circumstances is slowly

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

compelling a recognition of the error of that view; it is being brought home to us that the wages, the volume and the conditions of employment are indirectly but none the less powerfully influenced by every aspect of organized society. We are beginning to understand that how we spend our money affects our interests as vitally as how we earn it; hence the adoption of those imperfect instruments, the label and the boycott. And it may be hoped that eventually we will understand that, living in a society the members of which are all interdependent, we cannot separate our interests in any relation of life from our interests in every other.

If I were asked to put into one sentence my answer to the question, What shall we do? I would say, Co-operate for mutual benefit and protection in many ways as you already co-operate in one. Let that sentence stand for my thesis, and in the discussion which follows I will endeavor to show how I would equip and drill the army we have gathered.

## V. ORGANIZATION BY INDUSTRY

Shall organization in the future be in the form of allied industrial groups rather than by crafts?

Twenty years ago this question was a new one; to-day it is being hotly debated; ten years hence the answer will be unequivocal.

The reply of radical trade unionism the world over is an uncompromising affirmative, whether it be given by the C. G. T. in France, the Syndicalists in England, or the I. W. W. in America. But the more conservative unionism hesitates. It debates the pros and cons; it seeks to discover which is the better plan. It apparently assumes that either form of organization will serve, and that the question to be decided is one of comparative merits.

Loosely joined federations of allied trades, both local and national in scope, have long existed, and the experience of these bodies furnishes the basis of fact upon which both proponents and opponents rely for concrete illustrations of their respective contentions. Many things have hap-

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

pened in the history of these federations which give point to the arguments of those in the opposition, and there have been instances in which federations have formed and later have dissolved by reason of the clashing selfishnesses of the elements which composed them. The wisdom of "going it alone" is a matter of heated and bitter controversy.

It might seem proper here to summarize the arguments pro and contra, but it would be a waste of time and space to do so. In reality, the debate is vain. Organized labor will inevitably form itself into industrial groups, not as a matter of choice, but through the irresistible pressure of necessity, and because the reason for doing so is the fundamental reason which lies at the foundation of unionism. It was the obvious need for mutual assistance that led to the formation of trades unions; it is the same need, still obvious, that will lead to the formation of industrial unions.

In nearly all industries to-day employers are banded together in protective associations, and they act as a unit when any one of their number is involved in an industrial dispute. They make contracts, frequently overlapping, with the various

## ORGANIZATION BY INDUSTRY

craft unions employed in their industry, and to the extent that they are united in action while the unions act without coherence, there exists a condition analogous to that of the single employer of olden days facing his unorganized employees. The results that follow may best be understood from a practical illustration which I will take from my own trade.

The newspaper publishers of Chicago are members of a national association which has a local branch in that city. Their laws provide that if any one of them, by reason of a strike, is unable to publish his paper, the others shall make no attempt to publish their papers. They have further agreed to limit the size of their papers to the size of the one in difficulty. If a union shall cease work for any cause in the shop of one of its members, the association as a whole will refuse to employ any members of that union. Such a strike may come during or at the termination of a contract period. The contracts are made with the association, and provide that in the event of a breach in any shop, the others are absolved from further observance of its terms.

This is in effect a sympathetic strike by employers. Incidentally I will call attention to the

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

fact that the sympathetic strike by unions has never failed to bring forth strident denunciation as an unjustifiable interference in matters which did not concern them. But let that pass. Things being as I have described, in the event of a strike in the shop of one of those publishers, how about the other unions which have members in that shop? May they in their turn refuse to work because of the strike or lockout which has been enforced against a sister union? Not at all, for their contracts bind them for a stated period, and the contracts are made without any reference to each other. The sympathetic strike of the publishers is therefore in entire accordance with the contracts they have made with the various unions, while the sympathetic strike of any of the unions in support of another would constitute a breach.

In the following narrative it is not intended to discuss the merits of the dispute, but simply to show the advantage which this unity of action gives to the association of employers so long as the respective unions engaged in the industry manage their affairs without similar regard to their mutual interests.

The pressmen in the office of the Chicago American struck. This action led to the locking

## ORGANIZATION BY INDUSTRY

out of the men in the pressrooms of all the other papers. The pressmen's union appealed to the other unions for support. The stereotypers and delivery wagon drivers immediately responded. The publishers claimed this to be a breach of contract on the part of these two organizations, and locked out those of their members employed in the respective establishments. The compositors and mailers, after stormy discussion, voted to remain at work. (In passing it is worthy of mention that the compositors had walked out from the American the previous year; the publishers had limited their editions to the same size as the American was able to get out; none of the other unions struck with them, and the matter was adjusted by President Lynch, of the International Typographical Union, who ordered the men back, and secured obedience to his order through his firmness and the support of the union in meeting assembled.)

To continue the story. President Berry, of the International Pressmen's Union, sanctioned the strike in Chicago, and ordered strikes on all Hearst papers throughout the country, which order was obeyed in some cities and disregarded in others. President Freel, of the International

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

Stereotypers' Union, disavowed the action of the stereotypers, and eventually annulled their charter because they would not return to work. President Lynch, of the International Typographical Union, was successful in preventing a strike of compositors, although again he had to combat an element eager to get into the fight.

Consider the situation—pressmen and stereotypers calling the other unions traitors and scabs. Stereotypers of Chicago thrust out of fellowship with their comrades in the rest of the country. Pressmen in several cities threatened with annulment of charters because they had not obeyed President Berry's order to strike. An element among the compositors restive because they had not been permitted to join the striking pressmen and stereotypers. Dissensions and animosities that a generation will scarcely suffice to heal dividing the crafts concerned from each other, and bringing disruption among discordant elements within themselves. All this while a united publishers' association serenely faces the future. Said I not that the employers had learned unionism and had bettered the instruction?

It has been urged by the publishers that the pressmen had no right to strike in the first in-

## ORGANIZATION BY INDUSTRY

stance, while the union declares that it was the publishers who broke the agreement. Whichever statement is true has no effect on my contention. The other unions were bound in any case not to strike during the life of their respective agreements, and the merit of a strike by a sister union would have no valid effect upon the terms of the contracts, because of the manner in which they were made.

Instances of similar character might be multiplied, but they would mean simple iteration, and would add nothing to the weight of argument. This single illustration is sufficient to prove an intolerable and destructive condition. On the one hand, no consideration of whatever nature should lead us into repudiation of engagements entered into in good faith. No matter what the loss or injury, a contract once made must be lived up to during its term. If we have made a bad bargain, experience must teach us how to make better ones. Any temporary advantage accruing from broken contracts can never compensate for the enduring benefits that flow from the knowledge by the parties of the other part that we are good for any agreement we may enter into.

On the other hand, it is heartrending to see

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

disruption and animosity separating those whose every interest is identical; perhaps to see one craft beaten down while the others are not only prevented from aiding it, but must actually assist the process by remaining at work. Everything in such a situation must inure to the benefit of employers so long as it continues.

These are the reasons that make it certain that the evolution of the trades union movement will compel either a close alliance or an absolute merger of allied crafts, no matter what differences of opinion may now exist as to its advisability. A close analogy to the situation may be found in the condition of the thirteen original states immediately preceding the adoption of the Constitution. Like all autonomous bodies, each one was reluctant to give up any of the powers it possessed, and the smaller states were extremely apprehensive of the effects of the legislative preponderance that would necessarily be given to the larger. But the desperate condition of internal affairs plus the threatening attitude of certain European powers made union a matter of self preservation. For precisely similar reasons the craft unions must surrender all or a part of the autonomy they have so jealously guarded, must

## ORGANIZATION BY INDUSTRY

discard their animosities and suspicions, and must find a basis for unity of action.\*

Syndicalism is uncompromising in its advocacy of organization by industry, and syndicalism is right. In this manner only can the equilibrium between employers and employees be restored. This development is the natural one, because it is along the line of least resistance; co-operation is always along the line of least resistance.

\*Confirming what has just been written, just before going to press I read of the completion of a national organization to be known as the Structural Alliance, made up of the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers' Union, the Bricklayers' Union, and the Hoisting Engineers' Union. Under the constitution of the new association none of the trades can strike without the consent of the others. The announcement was made at Cleveland, Ohio, on September 20, 1912.

## VI. ARBITRATION

What form shall such industrial organizations take?

What tactics shall they adopt?

The answers to these questions are not simple. Both the form and the tactics of the organizations will depend upon the element that may control them. An industrial union in the hands of the I. W. W. will be a very different body, with very different aims, from one working along the traditional lines of collective bargaining. The aims and tactics of syndicalism have been sufficiently explained in a previous chapter, and it is self-evident that the industrial group will be a far more efficient machine to carry out those tactics and accomplish those aims than the trade organizations. But that fact should not prejudice the opponents of syndicalism against organization by industry, for it is equally self-evident that the industrial group will be far more efficient for the purposes of collective bargaining than the trades organizations. A difference that suggests itself

## . ARBITRATION

at once is that machinery for the adjudication of disputes is certain to be a feature in the event of control by what may be called the old-line trades unionists, while it is sure to be entirely rejected by those who regard any attempt at agreement with employers as treason to the cause of the employees, and who do not consider themselves as bound when they have entered into an agreement.

The terms upon which craft unions should amalgamate are incapable of discussion in an essay of this kind, wherein only general principles can be considered. Varying conditions and specific obstacles will no doubt be found in every industry; hence the arrangement of details must be given over to the parties directly interested. The most common cause of difference will probably be the weight to be accorded each of the constituent unions in whatever central body may be created. Difficult as this question may seem, it is not an insuperable obstacle if approached in a spirit of amity and mutual confidence. And the latter frame of mind should be the more easily attained when it is considered that it will be impossible for the larger trade unions to oppress or betray their weaker confederates without

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

doing irreparable injury to themselves. How true this is may well be learned from the experience of the United States. States like Delaware, Rhode Island and New Jersey were fearful of the effects if they intrusted their rights and liberties to a congress in which their representation would be comparatively feeble. But the experience of one hundred and twenty-five years has demonstrated that their fears were groundless, and that the national legislature, whatever other sins it may be charged with, has never shown any inclination to discriminate against the smaller members of the union.

Another objection to federation which is frequently urged by opponents is that any one of the craft unions, acting irresponsibly, may precipitate a strike and involve all the others, whether they approve of the strike or not. This need not necessarily be the case. To refer again to our national model: From the moment that the respective states became members of the Union, the national league known as the United States alone possessed the sovereign attribute of declaring war. In like manner the central body of the industrial union should exercise this and all other powers which directly concern the welfare

## ARBITRATION

of the whole industry, each craft union retaining jurisdiction only over such matters as are solely related to its own affairs. The amount of dues, the amount and nature of benefits, questions of internal organization, and so forth, would be matters for its own decision.

When the industrial union has been formed, and the character of its control has been made manifest, then the spirit and manner in which such a union shall approach employers becomes the next question for consideration. Should that control be revolutionary in sentiment, it would be needless to discuss this matter. No plan for the adjustment of disputes is compatible with the declared attitude of the I. W. W., and the course of events would be determined by the fortunes of war.

But those of us who expect to obtain our just share of the blessings of life through peaceful processes, and who will not consider other methods until those processes are absolutely exhausted, recognize that agreements of some kind are necessary, and that such agreements must provide means for the adjustment of disputes. Several methods are available, all of which have both merits and defects. Compulsory arbitration

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

through government officials is one such method. By this means contending parties must reach an adjustment of some sort. But the function of arbitration is not only to make adjustments, but to find such bases for making them that both parties shall be satisfied that substantial justice has been done between conflicting claims. Official arbitration has met with bitter opposition from both sides where it is in vogue; but that is not conclusive against it, for it is well known that voluntary arbitration has been assailed in the same manner. No form of arbitrament, from the trial by combat to hearings by courts, can ever satisfy all parties, but the best argument against compulsory arbitration is the psychological one that men always do with better grace what they are free to do than what they are constrained to do.

I have in mind two systems of voluntary arbitration which have both well served the purpose of preserving peace, but which may be contrasted on account of an essential difference. The cloak industry settles disputes through the medium of a joint board of employers and employees. In the event of a failure to agree, three persons not connected with the industry are

## ARBITRATION

added to the joint board and are given the deciding voice. The objection most commonly heard against this method of settlement of disputes is that the arbiters drawn from outside the industry are incompetent to decide many controverted matters because of lack of technical knowledge, and that their decisions sometimes reflect that ignorance to an extent which makes them dangerously unsatisfactory in that they create violent prejudice against the principle of arbitration.

Quite contrary to this is a method which has been employed by the International Typographical Union and the Newspaper Publishers Association of North America, which provides for a joint board of equal numbers from both sides, this board obliged to continue consideration until a decision is reached. The most common objection to this method is that intolerable delays are experienced, months and sometimes years elapsing before an adjudication is agreed upon.\*

\*Since the above was written the system of arbitration between these two bodies has been greatly modified. Local branches of the publishers' association or local unions may decline the international arbitration, or may make provision for local arbitration. Also, outside parties may be called in if the parties in interest cannot arrive at a settlement.

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

A much more complex system is one used in Germany, having been originated there in the printing industry. The plan has been in operation since 1896. From a pamphlet issued by Mr. Henry W. Cherouny, of New York City, himself an employing printer who has always evinced a spirit of fairness and conciliation toward his employees, the following statement of the form of government of the German Printers' League is taken, the employers being as much a part of the league as the journeymen:

"1. The Printers' Congress consists of nine employers and nine journeymen, and meets only on particular occasions for the purposes of making collective contracts and supervising the execution of the Common Rule. The members of the Congress are elected by each of the nine districts into which the empire has been divided, corresponding to our Congressional election districts. Tenure of office is three years.

"2. The National Joint Commission wields the executive power of the League. It is composed of three employers and three employees, all appointed by the Congress.

"3. The District Joint Commissions are composed of the members of the Congress living in the districts and of the two chairmen of the trade courts domiciled in the printing center.

"4. The Trade Courts have jurisdiction in all difficulties arising in individual offices working

## ARBITRATION

under the common scale. They consist of at least two or at most five elected members from each part, and meet at least twice a month. Eligible are only union employers and union journeymen. One employer and one journeyman preside and appoint two secretaries. The court is competent when two judges from both camps are present. Only an equal number from both sides can vote; if there happen to be present more members from one side than of the other, the surplus members can act only in an advisory capacity. A tie of votes is equal to a dismissal of the case. The costs are borne by the defeated parties. A dismissed case can go to appeal. There are now 35 trade courts in operation.

“5. The Common Labor Bureaus have to take care in the first instance of union men and union offices, and then of such as are willing to sign the common scale and to take the obligation in writing. Provision for union men who lost their situations through loyalty is the first duty. The bureaus are under control of the Joint Commission. In case of serious difficulties the two chairmen of the branch office can stop the use of the labor bureau until settlement is reported in writing. Difficulties arising from the operations of the labor bureau go before the Joint Commission, whose decision is final. The expenses are borne by both parties to the common scale. Union men and union offices are served without expense. There are 46 Printers' Labor Bureaus in operation.

“6. The Common Trade Schools. Apprentices are obliged to attend school three years, and are

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

at liberty to take a fourth year's course, which is free to all, and which is a kind of high school in the art of printing."

The result of the workings of this agreement is that 90 per cent. of the printing offices of the empire are union shops.

By the year 1905 the graphic, metal, wood, building, clothing, textile, transportation and food industries of Germany were organized more or less upon this model.

But I am not advocating any particular plan to the exclusion of any other. The one point of insistence is that a reasonable basis for maintaining ordinary intercourse must be found, nothing doubting that we shall progress faster and better on that line than by arousing plutocratic dogs of war, who, when they once taste blood, have always as raging a thirst for more as any "direct actionist" who ever expected to establish social justice with bomb and torch.

## VII. THE STRIKE

In the days that have been strikes were generally of limited local extent. A single trade in a shop, or at most, a trade in the shops of a single town or city, were involved. The disturbance created hardly a ripple beyond the circle of those directly concerned, and the claim is true, as made by the men whose faces are turned to the past, that the percentage of successful strikes (i.e., strikes which in whole or in part brought to the unions the specific gain they were striking for) was sufficiently large to justify the dependence placed on it as the principal weapon of unionism.

But other times, other conditions. There has been a distinct decrease in the efficiency of strikes entered upon by unions of employees because unions of employers are now more powerful and better equipped. In some industries concentration has reached the point where the opportunity to find employment is confined to the service of a very few corporations. The effect of these circumstances is twofold: It makes

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

the chances of striking employees far more dubious, and it tremendously widens the field which may be affected by any strike, until at present strikes of national and even international extent are comparatively frequent. Conversely, the sufferings and miseries caused by strikes, to those directly engaged and to those who are involved without voluntary action, are enormously increased.

These concurrent tendencies—concentration of ownership or close affiliation on the part of employers, with organization by industry on the part of employees—must continuously operate to make strikes and lockouts more and more terrible industrial convulsions. The forces aligned against each other will be titanic, and the injuries the contending parties will be able mutually to inflict will be proportionate to the magnitude of their organizations. Like wars between nations, industrial conflicts will become tremendous and destructive to a degree hitherto inconceivable.

Can the strike be discarded? No! And preparations to use the strike as a last resource are dictated by the commonest prudence. Referring again to the conduct and methods of the nations, we see that while they make arbitration treaties and

## THE STRIKE

establish arbitral courts, yet prudence leads them to prepare for the contingency of war. In like manner we must be in a position to strike effectively if need be, while neglecting no means to avoid the necessity. Also, although this essay is addressed to organized labor, in this chapter it is permissible to say a word to organized capital. In both camps may be found men of similar temperament, whose impulse it is to seek nothing else and nothing less than the utter annihilation of the other, and to seek it by the application of what each believes they possess—the power of superior force. The violence of one is matched by the cold-blooded brutality of the other, with better excuse for the syndicalists urged by need than for their prototypes urged by greed. Those of us on either side who know that we must live with each other, and who are willing to permit the slow and peaceful course of evolution to shape the final form which industry shall assume, are bound to strive against both.

The strike must then be regarded as our last dread resource, prepared for with all the foresight at our command. Precisely in proportion to the self-restraint we exercise in its use, and to the provident care with which we make ready for

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

the hour in which there may be no alternative, will it be effective when we do have recourse to it. By toil and sacrifice our predecessors laid the foundation for the unionism of to-day, and toil and sacrifice must we be prepared to give whenever the occasion demands it. But as solemnly as it is in the power of language to do so, I would adjure those whose province it is to order or advise the strike to feel the responsibility for their counsel or command. Let every arrow of privation or misery that may be entailed touch them in imagination before it touches their followers in reality. Finally, let our attitude be that advised by Polonius:

“Beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,  
Bear it that the opposed may beware of thee.”

## VIII. INSURANCE BENEFITS

Any proposed extension of the traditional activities of trades unions invariably meets with determined opposition. A large and influential element persists in regarding the function of the union as confined solely to the matters of wage scales, hours of labor and shop conditions. They rely upon the theory that concentration of effort in these directions brings the only results worth striving for, while the inclusion of mutual benefit features means diffusion of energy and loss of effectiveness. These votaries of the "good old ways" never abandon this position concerning any proposition until dislodged by the unanswerable logic of events, and then retreat only to throw up similar breastworks at the next turn in the road, from behind which they will make just as stubborn resistance to the next innovation.

The concrete propositions upon which issue is joined relate to insurance against sickness, old age and death. Unemployment might also be considered, but there are arguments against that

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

form of insurance that cannot be urged against the other three; so in order to prevent confusion it may be considered by itself.

In limited degree various unions have created provision for the protection of their membership against the consequences of one or more of these inevitable afflictions; but speaking generally, unionism has hitherto been reluctant to enter upon these fields. The favorite argument that fraternal orders and insurance companies can best look after that business, while we have enough to do to take care of strictly union business, seems conclusive to many; while probably a larger number are easily aroused by the contention that personal liberty is invaded; that the kind and amount of insurance they shall carry is a matter of personal concern, and that if they have enough already or do not want any at all, it is not the province of any organization to compel them to purchase a protection of which they do not feel the need.

The answers to both these arguments are plain and convincing. Benefit insurance is a business-like proposition for trades unions, feasible as to cost and of incalculable value for organization purposes, and it is not an invasion of individual

## INSURANCE BENEFITS

rights. Those who find themselves aggrieved on this latter account would do well to remember that every association of human beings for mutual benefit is only possible by the surrender of some part of their individual freedom of action. The political community is based upon that principle, and voluntary associations of every character must of necessity conform to it. If the general welfare in the case under discussion is best served by the adoption of insurance features, then the enforcement upon all members of laws to that end is no more an invasion of individual right than the enforcement of an order to strike, or of an assessment to maintain others on strike. The individual may disapprove of the strike or the assessment, but he submits because he knows that his best interest requires the existence of an association with power to order and maintain such measures, even though he may upon some occasions disagree with the exercise of that power. It follows, then, that the man who willingly surrenders some individual freedom of action when he joins a union, for the purpose of securing the much greater advantages that attend concerted action, should regard this question of insurance in the same light as he does other things

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

that the union takes under its jurisdiction, and should not consider it an invasion of his personal rights if it is shown that such features tend to the upbuilding of the organization and to the consequent advantage of every individual in it.

To the man who honestly thinks he is carrying the limit of insurance, it may be pointed out that the sum usually carried is pitifully small (speaking now of mortuary insurance) and the addition of even a few hundreds may be of extraordinary importance. A \$1,000 policy only capitalizes a year's earnings of the average mechanic, and I venture to assert that comparatively few have so much as \$2,000; several hundred dollars to the family in the time of stress are much more useful than the pennies paid for them while the head of the family is in health and working. As for sick benefits, the stricken workman needs more money when he is sick than when he is well, and a wise man would never think he had too much until he had provided an insurance equal to his usual earnings, and not one in ten thousand does that.

It remains to prove that insurance protection against these common exigencies of life can be furnished by a union at a cost which makes them

## INSURANCE BENEFITS

good business propositions and at the same time essential to organization work. It is common knowledge that many workingmen are notoriously improvident in these matters, and this not because they do not earn enough to devote some part of their incomes to such purposes, but because they seem actually to begrudge money so spent if there is no immediate return. There are also unfortunately many whose earnings are so small that they feel unable to spare any part of them for purposes not immediately necessary. These two classes furnish the numerous cases of want and misery which union men are continually called upon to relieve by voluntary subscriptions. Thus the generous fraction of the membership assumes a burden which should of right be carried by the whole, and those who need relief must ask from the charity of their fellows that which would foster self-respect if received as a right. Those whose careless improvidence exposes them to the full force of the blasts of misfortune are temperamentally just as indifferent to the expenditure when under the laws of their union they are accustomed to paying the cost of protection as a fixed charge included in dues. Those whose limited earnings are responsible for the lack of

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

prudent provision may be protected at nominal cost if the insurance fund is collected upon the basis of a percentage of earnings rather than at a flat rate. Considerations of brevity make it inexpedient to take the many sides of these collateral questions and argue them all out in detail, but I cannot forbear saying that the percentage plan is the only truly fraternal plan, and for that reason best for organizing purposes. The man who earns most should pay most. Objectors will not fail to point to this as an injustice. In reality, it is the truest justice. If this method of taxation is not employed, the aged, the infirm, the unemployed might find the assessment a real burden, and not only their insurance, but their membership would be imperiled by inability to pay it. At the same time the member earning good wages is scarcely conscious that he is paying an assessment. Also, the man in receipt of a good scale or more must remember two things in this connection: One is that his scale depends in large measure upon the loyalty of the less fortunate; the other is that he does not know when he will be one of the less fortunate himself. The percentage plan is a practical application of the doctrine, "Each for all and all for each." If a man

## INSURANCE BENEFITS

buys insurance from a company or a fraternal order, and for any reason, after any period of time, is unable to maintain his payments, his policy lapses. The union man, if the system of percentage on earnings is adopted, obviously pays no assessments when he is not earning anything, although his right to benefits is not in any degree curtailed by that circumstance. The value of this method as an organizing argument is self-evident.

Let us now consider the question of cost: Enough experience has been gained in the provision of various insurances to show that the unions are able to fulfil their obligations at a cost which compares favorably with that charged for equivalent service by insurance companies and fraternal orders. The Cigarmakers' International Union is by odds the most progressive body in this respect among unions, both in the variety of benefits and the amounts paid. In the comparisons here made it must be remembered that cigarmaking is not regarded as a healthy trade, and the International Cigarmakers' Union cannot select its risks for obvious reasons; yet it will be seen that they maintain benefits at a cost lower than organizations whose particular business it is. That union has been in this business of

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

insurance for thirty-two years, and its results are worthy of respect. It pays sick benefits of \$5.00 per week for thirteen weeks in any year; the highest cost per member in any year has been \$4.13. Compare that with the Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias and other societies. They usually pay \$5.00 a week for thirteen weeks and half benefits for thirteen more, the dues almost invariably being \$8.00 per year. Need the union fear this comparison?

Take now the death and total disability benefit. A graduated benefit is paid, with a maximum of \$550 for fifteen years' membership. The highest cost per member in any year was \$5.03, but the average cost was much less. The New York Life Insurance Company charges \$19.62 per \$1,000 ordinary life at age 21, which would be \$9.80 for \$550. While it is true that the union does not pay \$550 until membership has continued fifteen years, it is also true that most men do not seek insurance at age 21, and the comparison in favor of the union would be greater the longer the taking of a policy is delayed.

The International Typographical Union on April 1, 1912, instituted a graduated mortuary benefit, with a maximum of \$400 for five years'

## INSURANCE BENEFITS

membership. The cost per member is one-half of one per cent. on earnings, which averages a little less than \$5.00 per member, and judging by mortality tables of the union for twenty years, this assessment will be sufficient to meet all obligations. The New York Life rate of \$19.62 at age 21 would mean a rate of \$7.85 for \$400; and thus again the union need not fear comparison.

Reasons why the cost of this insurance is so comparatively cheap were made manifest when the mortuary benefit was established by the International Typographical Union. With the exception of hiring a few additional clerks at international headquarters, the existing administrative machinery of the union was ample for taking care of the additional business. No additional salaries were paid on its account (except the few clerks already mentioned), no additional rent was incurred, no commissions were paid, in short, expenses of administration were practically nil. Another is that the rates of life insurance companies are based on the American Mortality Table, while it is acknowledged that for many years past their experience has been better than that indicated by the table. These facts go far toward explaining how rates so

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

greatly in favor of the unions may be well within the margin of safety.

The Cigarmakers' International Union has also an unemployment benefit of \$3.00 per week. This has been paid for twenty-two years, and the average cost per year per member has been \$2.003. The cost fluctuates widely, according to the state of trade. The highest cost was \$6.434 (1896) and the lowest per member per year was \$0.39 $\frac{1}{2}$  (1903). Of course, this cost cannot be compared with any insurance sold elsewhere, because an unemployment benefit is purely for organizing work.

I have cited these few facts to prove that trades union insurance is a sound business proposition, regardless of its value in securing and retaining members. But my contention is that even if such insurance were actually more costly than if purchased elsewhere, the contingent advantages are so great that it should nevertheless be a part of the activity of every union. I have been assured by responsible officers of the International Cigarmakers' Union that the sick and death benefits they pay have been of inestimable value in holding their membership in the face of adverse circumstances that might otherwise have caused

## INSURANCE BENEFITS

disruption. It must be obvious that every additional benefit contingent upon membership in a union is an additional tie to be broken before a man can bring himself to the point where he is willing to throw away all that membership means.

It will be urged that the cost of these benefits may frighten prospective members. But there is no substantial basis for alarm on this account, because persons seek membership in a union for industrial reasons, and the man who needs the protection of a union will seek it; also because new members get a valid return for their money, and the arguments that appeal to the present membership of a union for the adoption of these forms of mutual assistance would be equally convincing to the man about to join.

A complete system of benefits should include provision for aged and incapacitated members. All that has been urged heretofore is applicable to old age pensions, but that branch of the subject requires special consideration because there are circumstances surrounding it which will soon make it a burning question for organized labor, while sick benefits and mortuary insurance remain more or less subjects for academic discussion.

Every man who is reasonably well informed will

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

know that in Europe the protection of the superannuated workman against absolute indigence has been viewed as a question of national concern, has been officially studied, and is now one of the functions of government. With Germany and Great Britain leading, there can be little doubt that all Europe will follow in this disposition of a vital matter. The arguments pro and con which may be offered in relation to this system of government supervision of old age insurance may be omitted here, for there is no present probability that the Government of the United States or of any state will accept the view that the care of the superannuated workman is a duty of society and a proper exercise of governmental functions.

Not only is there no present likelihood of the adoption of the European solution of this problem in the United States but there are indications that one of two solutions may be evolved in this country, either of which, if it becomes general, will practically preclude governmental assumption of what is so clearly a social necessity that some way of providing for it must be found.

In Germany, Great Britain and France the necessary fund for old age pensions is obtained by contributions from the Government, the

## INSURANCE BENEFITS

employer and the employed. The collection from each party is compulsory and the fund is at all times under official control. The workman's right to change his employment is not in any way interfered with, as the payment of his pension is in no sense dependent upon his continuance in any particular employ. The pension is a right secured to him by law, and not a gratuity given by an employer. The employer's power to discharge and the employee's right to leave are both unimpaired.

In this country there is coming into vogue a system of old age pensions by which this vital principle is weakened and may be destroyed. Large corporations, dominating highly centralized industries, have formulated pension systems to be maintained entirely at their own cost, but which, as a more than compensating advantage, are held entirely under their arbitrary control. The employees of these corporations can only become beneficiaries of such pension funds if they remain in their positions continuously until the age of retirement is reached. Therefore, to the extent that the prospect of a pension is permitted to influence their action, they have surrendered their industrial freedom. But while this unbroken

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

period of service is demanded as a condition precedent to the grant of a pension, it does not confer the right to one. The employee desiring a pension may not quit his employment under any circumstances, but the employer retains the right to discharge him at any time and for any reason, and is not bound either to give him a pension when the age of retirement is reached or to continue it if given.

The pension plan of the United States Steel Corporation, which became effective January 1, 1911, may be regarded as the pattern upon which such systems will be modeled. The fund is to be administered by a board of trustees, upon which the employees are not given representation, and in the selection of the members of which they have no voice. The regulations are drawn with great care to prevent an employee from establishing either a right to a job or a right to a pension. That these objects have been thoroughly accomplished is evident from the following provisions:

Article 22: "Pensions may be withheld or terminated in case of misconduct on the part of the beneficiaries or for other cause sufficient in the judgment of the board of trustees to warrant such action."

## INSURANCE BENEFITS

Article 24: "The pension plan is a purely voluntary provision for the benefit of employees superannuated or totally incapacitated after long and faithful service and constitutes no contract and confers no legal rights upon any employee."

Article 26: "Neither the creation of this fund nor any other action at any time taken by any corporation included under the provisions of the fund, or by the board of trustees, shall give to any employee the right to be retained in the service, and all employees remain subject to discharge to the same extent as if this pension fund had never been created."

The pension plan of the International Harvester Company provides:

Article 14: "Neither the establishment of this system nor the granting of a pension nor any other action now or hereafter taken by the pension board or by the officers of the company shall be held or construed as creating a contract or giving to any officer, agent or employee the right to be retained in the service or any right to any pension allowance, and the company expressly reserves, unaffected hereby, its right to discharge without liability, other than for salary or wages due and unpaid, any employee, whenever the interests of the company may in its judgment so require."

The corporations creating these pension systems are not actuated by altruistic motives. Their object is to buy something, and that something

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

is a quality they are pleased to call "loyalty." Whether provisions like the above are calculated to foster true loyalty is more than doubtful, but the real purpose of the fund is not doubtful. The pension offered is expected to be an insurance against strikes, and the expense of the system is but the premium paid for that insurance. It is no secret that the Steel Corporation has left nothing undone in furtherance of its purpose to completely eliminate organization among its employees, and its pension system is but one means to that end. How successful it will be from the corporation's viewpoint it is yet too soon to say, but it is not an evidence of wisdom on our part to underestimate its possible influence. A young man, free from family responsibilities, to whom the idea of diminished efficiency by reason of advancing years seems as remote as eternity, may give little heed to the loss of a pension from the enjoyment of which he is separated by an intervening lifetime; but it is quite another matter with the man upon whose head the snow blossoms are beginning to appear, and who may have to his credit a considerable period of service. He may hesitate long before casting away this provision, even with the uncertainties that hedge

## INSURANCE BENEFITS

it about, and this hesitation may be further emphasized by the difficulty he is likely to experience in finding new employment in competition with the younger men. To such a man the necessity for a pension is no longer remote, and the influence of the one so offered may prove at some crucial moment to be decisive.

Many large corporations have already adopted systems similar to the one outlined. Many more will probably do so. Let us ask ourselves very seriously if the general adoption of this system of pensions would not be a solution of the problem which is full of menace to our organizations. If it is to the advantage of employers to offer a provisional pension, surrounded by a dozen qualifying ifs and buts, would it not be to the advantage of trades unions to offer a pension on a straightforward basis, absolutely secured to the union man as a right, on the sole condition of continuous membership for a term of years? If "union busters" regard such a proposition as good business for themselves, why should not a far better proposition be good business for us?

Any pension which is contingent upon the continued service of the workman in a particular employment is an injustice to the workman and

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

a danger to the organization. The way to meet that danger and to overcome that injustice is to create a pension system in every union, and to that extent protect the industrial liberty of those who are or who may become members. If this argument is well taken, it would seem that pensions must in self-defense be made a part of the organization work of trades unions.

The report of the American Federation of Labor for 1911 (p. 90), gives a table purporting to show what benefits are paid by affiliated unions. This table makes no mention of old age pensions, leading to the inference that none are paid. But the table is incomplete at least in this regard, that the International Typographical Union has maintained a pension fund since March, 1908. The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, both English organizations with branches on this side of the Atlantic, also pay old age pensions. Apart from these I know of none. An assessment of one-half of one per cent. on all earnings of members of the International Typographical Union enables the payment of \$5.00 per week to incapacitated members. The fund has shown a surplus of receipts over ex-

## INSURANCE BENEFITS

penditures in each year since its establishment, and the report of the Secretary-Treasurer to the convention of 1912 shows a balance in hand of \$522,886.39. But this large accumulation is a reserve against that time when we may reasonably expect a great increase in the number of pensioners through the action of natural causes. Thus, an average of \$4.96 a year secures to each member an annuity of \$260 a year, in case of necessity, with no obligation for the payment of assessments if for any reason earnings are cut off. And the dividend in the shape of greater fraternalism cannot be calculated.

Insurance against unemployment would seem to be as necessary as any other of the benefits discussed. But there seem to be greater difficulties in the equitable distribution of a fund for this purpose than arise in the handling of the others. The stumbling block is invariably to be found in the fact that some men become parasites, being disinclined to work in any case, and making no pretense at all of seeking employment when they are assured even so small an allowance as an out-of-work fund can afford. My own local union has had considerable experience in the maintenance of such a fund, and that experience was in

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

great measure discouraging. We found that a number of men drew in each year the full amount that was permitted under the laws regulating the fund, and that these men could best be described as "panhandlers." The abuse in our case eventually became so flagrant that the fund was abolished, upon the report of an investigating committee to the effect that the majority of beneficiaries belonged to this dissolute class. Nevertheless, it is the fact that unemployment insurance is and long has been maintained by European unions, and in this country the Cigarmakers' International Union has conducted such an insurance for twenty-two years, and such comment as has reached me does not indicate so scandalous a condition as compelled its abandonment by Typographical Union No. 6. It must be admitted that in this particular form of insurance the problem is complicated by the considerations presented, and it is difficult to do justice by worthy members without doing injustice to those who bear the burden; nevertheless, the difficulty is not insuperable, and certainly careful regulation would reduce abuses to a minimum.

But, omitting unemployment insurance from the list, I am firm in the conviction that the chain of

## **INSURANCE BENEFITS**

benefits, each of which tends in some degree to make a union card a more valuable possession, will, if taken together, exercise a cumulative influence which it would be difficult to overestimate. And under this head, as under every other in the constructive plan presented, the central idea is mutual assistance and co-operation. In this activity, as in all the rest, co-operation is the line of least resistance.

## IX. THE APPRENTICE

It is a frequent contention of organized labor that the best workmen are to be found within its ranks. The contention has much support in fact, for it would otherwise be manifestly impossible for organized labor to command any recognition whatever. But if it is a source of the strength of unionism that it holds the allegiance of the majority of good workmen, it is no less a source of weakness that it embraces so many mediocre and poor ones. There can be no disagreement with the statement that if the standard of workmanship for the general average of union workmen was considerably raised, the potency of unionism would be greatly increased.

The employer who agrees to employ none but union workmen has a valid grievance if he finds any considerable percentage of his workmen more or less incompetent. The ready reply that he can discharge them neither meets his grievance nor adds to the desirability of a contract with the union. On the contrary, to the extent that he

## THE APPRENTICE

has cause for complaint on this ground the contract is distinctly depreciated.

Under conceivable circumstances he cannot discharge them, or can do so only at a loss. In cases of emergency, where some work must be done within limited time, or in seasons when work is plentiful and the demand for men is equal to the supply, or even temporarily exceeds it, very inferior workmen are retained if the need for their service is so pressing as to overcome the dissatisfaction caused by their incompetency. Another reason why they cannot be discharged without loss is that many union scales provide that a man engaged must be paid for a certain time, whatever the unit may be, a day being the smallest unit permissible. This rule is a just one, for men ordered to report should be assured of something. But it would appear to be equally just that men sent in answer to a call addressed to union headquarters should be competent to do the work for which the call itself assures their pay.

We demand and enforce a closed shop wherever possible. There could be no greater force behind that demand than a high standard of competency in the men who make it. And such a standard

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

would conduce to the peaceful settlement of the question of the closed shop, at least in industries requiring skill, for the line of least resistance for the employer in such a case would be to turn to a sufficiently numerous organized body of efficient workmen, and to contract with them for such help as he requires, thus solving one of the most vexatious problems with which he must contend—the selection of a capable force of workmen.

The establishment of a high standard of competency is an object worthy of the best efforts of the unions, both for its favorable effect on the prospects of individual members and the tremendously increased strength of the unions as organizations. How shall that object be attained?

As the twig is bent so will the tree incline. The competent workman is the growth of the well trained apprentice. Natural adaptability and quickness of perception quite often enable a neglected apprentice to make of himself a competent journeyman, but the results of neglect are nevertheless painfully apparent in every trade. In this country the boy who learns a trade “steals” it, as the phrase goes. Sometimes he has nothing more to complain of than indifference and neglect; sometimes he has to overcome

## THE APPRENTICE

open or overt hostility. In either case it is a policy which in its results is equivalent to race suicide on the destiny of nations. To the extent to which responsibility for this condition may justly be laid at our door we are demonstrating both selfishness and shortsightedness to an inexcusable degree. A generation of apprentices grows to manhood every five years, and the strength and permanence of our institution is dependent primarily upon the absorption of the principles of co-operation by these boys, and then upon their ability as workmen; for there can be no successful refutation of the dogma that the union is negligible unless it includes the major fraction of competent artisans, and it becomes proportionately more powerful as that fraction approaches 100 per cent. of the number of desirable men engaged in the industry.

Many a man who is a competent artisan to-day knows that he has really learned his trade after he became a journeyman, by the exercise of his faculties of observation and imitation, rather than by the teaching to which he as an apprentice was entitled. Others, whose unaided capacity to learn was not equal to the task, remain unfortunate incompetents through life. It is true

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

that some boys will make no effort to learn, but are contented to loaf their way through their junior years, heedless of the penalty they will be called upon to pay when manhood is reached, but even that fact is capable of correction if intelligent and systematic training is enforced upon boys by the supervising authority of the union.

Employers must accept a share of the responsibility for this state of affairs. In their desire to transmute the boy's services into the largest immediate cash return to themselves, the boy is utilized during all or a greater part of his apprenticeship at tasks requiring no great skill, or else is taught a single operation, and kept continuously employed in its repetition. The boy of good natural capacity and praiseworthy ambition will absorb theory and will "steal" practice, but too many contentedly sink into the rut so conveniently laid down for them. Some individual workmen are imbued with that generous spirit which makes them regard it as a duty to assist the eager learner; some are so lacking in human fellowship as to be capable of actually obstructing the boy in his progress over what is at best a thorny path. But most men are simply indifferent—willing to answer a question or give

## THE APPRENTICE

some instruction if the assistance is not too frequently requested, but not at all likely to discommode themselves or to interest themselves.

It is clear, then, that this important matter cannot be left to the employer, the workman or the boy himself. The union alone can do much toward remedying the evil, but the ideal method is that of co-operation between the union and the employer, with definite regulations rigidly enforced. In this country the International Typographical Union has made a praiseworthy beginning in the direction of proper training by the establishment of a correspondence course which has justified itself by excellent results, both for the apprentice and for the journeyman who sought its benefits. But good as this course is, it can never reach the root of the evil and will never eradicate more than a small percentage of incompetency. Being optional, and costing a little money, it cannot do its beneficent work until it has first overcome the inertia which is the principal stumbling block to all efforts at human betterment. Praiseworthy effort is indeed made to accomplish this by widespread advertising in the printing trade of the unquestionable usefulness of the course; still, the response is but a limited

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

one as compared with the whole number who need instruction.

It is both the duty and the interest of a union to exercise supervision over the training of apprentices. We may assume that most employers would give hearty support to a serious effort to remedy this evil, and in the cases of such as would not, there can be no doubt as to which side public sentiment would take if a controversy arose between a union seeking to secure adequate training for apprentices and an employer who wished to exploit them for his own profit, to the destruction of their prospects. Agreements between the parties should contain definite provisions as to the course of instructions to be laid down for apprentices, and there should be periodical examinations to determine proficiency, by a board upon which both employers and employees are represented. The details of such a system would necessarily be determined by the special circumstances surrounding each industry; but in every instance haphazard compliance with or evasion of the agreement should be prevented by placing specific duties and responsibilities upon proper officials or representatives of the

## THE APPRENTICE

union and of the association of employers.

Inequality of ability will make natural gradations of competency among boys, no matter whether well or ill trained. But an apprentice who goes through such a course of preparation with nothing better than a rating high enough to pass him, is even then certain to be an artisan of skill sufficient to enable him to meet the ordinary requirements of his employment. A further important advantage of such a system is its automatic elimination of the incapable and undesirable. The boy who cannot be taught and the boy who will not learn, the mentally or physically deficient, and the idle or vicious, will develop those characteristics, and it should be a function of the examining board to exercise discretion in such instances.

Boys so taught and watched over by a union will absorb unionism with every breath; will see its benefits demonstrated to their own advantage from the hour they begin their apprenticeship; will find themselves protected against favoritism and assured of equal opportunity. Parents will endeavor to have their boys brought up under such auspices, and the men such boys will grow into will seldom fail to be both a credit to and a bulwark of the union which thus guarded them.

## **X. CO-OPERATIVE TRADING (WITH AN ADDED FEATURE)**

To raise wages is not the only means of making the members of a union prosperous. Under conceivable circumstances raising wages may be of no benefit whatever. For more than a decade there has been a steady increase in the cost of living. Trades unions have made this increased cost of living the basis of demands for higher wages, and have in the more successful instances secured increases of from 10 to 20 per cent. during a period in which the average increase in the cost of commodities has been 35 per cent. and the increase in food stuffs (the largest single item in the expenditure of the average family) has been as high as 70 per cent.

If the unions had succeeded in uniformly raising wages in the same degree as prices had advanced, they would at the same time have made the lot of less fortunate persons still harder to bear. If the whole working population had been successful in securing added compensation equal to the

## CO-OPERATIVE TRADING

advance in prices, none of them would have been benefited; the demand for an increased wage would begin again, and the vicious circle be traversed once more. Not only more wages, but more for our wages should be our object.

The basic fact of higher cost of living being incontrovertible, increases have in many cases been obtained, in some few instances being voluntarily granted. Do these increases in wage, then, bring about such a betterment in burdensome conditions as give reasonable contentment to those who receive them?

Every increase in wages is at once added to the cost of the product, and always with additional charge for the greater capital employed. A couple of illustrations will serve to show addition to selling cost for which increased wages are the excuse. In the first example a clothing manufacturer was accustomed to add 25 per cent. to the manufacturing cost of his product. Wage increases made a suit that had cost \$5.00 to manufacture stand him \$6.00. He recouped himself, not by adding the extra dollar to the selling cost, but by adding the same 25 per cent. to the new manufacturing cost. Hence the suit was not raised \$1.00, but \$1.25, and the manufacturer

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

got a larger margin than before. The other instance was far worse. When the coal miners secured an increase of 10 per cent. in 1903, that increase was based on the cost of a ton of coal ready for shipment, which was about \$1.80, hence the increased wage was about 18 cents a ton. The coal companies (the railroads) immediately increased the cost of a ton of coal 10 per cent. But the price of coal was \$5.00, and 10 per cent. added to that sum made the ton of coal cost \$5.50. Thus the outlay of 18 cents in wages was made the excuse for extorting 50 cents from the consumer. Within the present year a similar piece of manipulation which added 6 cents to the wage cost of a ton of coal was the basis for an increase of 25 cents in selling price. There need be no doubt that wage increases are universally transferred in this manner to the consumer, and nearly always with an additional impost. Under such circumstances wage increases are but a doubtful benefit to the mass of workers.

Many causes have been assigned for the terrifying increase in living cost which we must face. Scientific economists blame it on the enlarged production of gold. "Union busters" lay

## CO-OPERATIVE TRADING

it all at the door of unions. Land speculation is not without blame, for speculative increases in land values and the locking up of land-using opportunities must enhance the cost of all land in use, which in turn reacts upon the cost of all products. The tariff gives some thrifty gentlemen an opportunity which they are quick to see and take advantage of. Devious burrowings into the public purse were estimated by Judge Howard, of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, as responsible for the wasteful dissipation of 40 per cent. of the amount collected. Monopolistic ownerships and wasteful use of natural resources are a principal factor. Each of these has its influence on the cost of living, and no one of them can be awarded the bad eminence of being the sole cause.

But there is one infliction which is the source of as much of the extortion which is bleeding us white as any of them, perhaps more than any single one. That is the toll taken by the middleman—big and little—who stands between producer and consumer and unconscionably robs both. While all the other causes mentioned above cannot be directly attacked by the unions, this last matter

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

of the middleman is one evil that it is in our power greatly to abate.

Organized labor has hitherto devoted its attention almost entirely to matters concerning production. Wage scales, shop conditions and the like have been subjects of union legislation. The influence of the problems of distribution upon our welfare has been ignored until recently, when the boycott and the union label have been more or less exploited in the attempt to exercise some degree of control over distribution. Since it was a limited application of the principle of co-operation that has won for trades unions so much success as they have attained, it should be obvious to the meanest intelligence that further advance can only be gained by broader applications of the same principle.

It has been shown in previous chapters that the advancement, or even the maintenance, of the interests of trades unionism was made increasingly difficult by the growth of organization among employers. The realization of this fact led to a search for expedients to stimulate the use of union made products as such, and so enhance the influence of unionism and increase its membership. Particularly it became evident to union

## CO-OPERATIVE TRADING

men that the expenditure of our earnings, which might be made so powerful a factor in upbuilding our organizations, was in major part actually being spent for the strengthening and enrichment of non-union plants and workmen, and in some measure to the advantage of bitterly active opponents. So the label and boycott came to be included in the policies of organized labor, and it is now pertinent to inquire to what extent they have been successful instruments for the purpose for which they were designed.

The boycott, being a direct antagonism of definite persons and products, was sure to arouse violent resentment and any kind of retaliation that was in the power of those attacked. It was one of those policies that could not fail to become a matter of judicial review, and it was reasonably certain that courts would in the main render decisions unfavorable to its legal status. Although no pronouncement has as yet been made by the United States Supreme Court as to the legality of the boycott, it is wise to anticipate that when the question is squarely before that tribunal, the decision will be against us. It is possible to make a defense of our right to boycott, and such a defense was written by me and pub-

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

lished in *The Independent* of January 28, 1909. But it would lead us too far afield to consider that point in this connection. What we are now concerned with is whether the boycott is the best instrument, or even a good instrument for the purpose in view. The effort to carry on boycotts, being thus certain to involve us in legal difficulties, it remains to be seen whether the results obtained are worth the expenditure of money and energy necessary to obtain them.

It was my fortune to take a very active part in the boycott instituted against the products of the Butterick Company by Typographical Union No. 6 in 1906, and later carried on by the International Typographical Union. This boycott was, I verily believe, better organized, more determined, and more damaging to the parties it was aimed at than any other I have knowledge of, not excepting that against the Buck Stove and Range Company, which is more widely known only because of the adventitious circumstances that brought the highest officials of the American Federation of Labor into court. Not only in the United States and Canada, but in Cuba, Germany and Austria the International Typographical Union cut into the sales and captured the cus-

## CO-OPERATIVE TRADING

tomers of the Butterick Company. Wherever a typographical union was organized, there, in greater or less degree the boycott was pushed. The expected court proceedings were in evidence at all times. There were arrests, injunctions, actions for criminal contempt, etc. In short, I doubt if a more thorough trial of the efficiency of the boycott has ever been made.

Now, what about results? That the Butterick people were considerably damaged they themselves admitted. Eventually the Butterick house was unionized again, but it is not possible for us to say to what extent the boycott was responsible for that consummation. It is within my knowledge, however, that it had been decreasing in intensity for two years before an agreement with the company was reached, in 1911, and that at the time of settlement the boycott was practically dormant.

I was very active in this matter, and from the experience then gained I have reached definite conclusions. We expended a large amount of money; how large I do not know. There was a continuous distribution of printed matter and of comparatively expensive novelties bearing appropriate inscriptions. There were speakers sent to

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

tion. Few men and fewer women are heroic enough to spend time and carfare to get a union label on their purchases. Of course, if all union men and those dependent on them were filled with a spirit of unwavering determination to buy only label goods, a demand so insistent would lead to the creation of markets where it could be supplied. But we all know how far short the union army falls of such devotion. Another serious objection is that label goods are often either inferior in quality or more expensive. This charge is undeniable. The unions state the conditions of wages and hours upon which the use of the label is permitted, but they have no voice as to quality or price. Both manufacturers and middlemen, in localities where there is a genuine demand for label products, load on all the traffic will bear, being well aware that the label covers a multitude of sins. But the result of this fact is to create a prejudice against label goods even among union men, and as for the general public, it would be a persuasive orator indeed who could induce them to pay more money for less value out of sympathy with unionism.

The advertising of a label, like the advertising of a boycott, is very expensive. And also, like

## CO-OPERATIVE TRADING

the boycott, the personal devotion of the membership is essential to success. The labor attendant upon keeping it before the public must not be permitted to lag, or the effect is disastrous. Yet with all this, it is a question whether the return is a respectable equivalent for the outlay of money and energy. The hatters' label is probably a notable exception to this rule, and in a less degree the labels of the printers and cigar-makers. The latter are really marvels of pertinacity in their label work, yet withal I am inclined to believe that their results are no more than moderately successful.

This is not an attack upon the present instruments of organization work. Until better means are found, it is impossible to dispense with them. But we should not be content with the assumption that boycott and label are the best devices for creating markets for union products, and thus stimulating union growth. The considerations above presented lead me to the conclusion that the manner in which boycott and label exploitation is conducted is wasteful and unscientific, in that it is lacking in the element of definiteness. There is no systematic arrangement or plan for the attainment of well understood purposes, but only

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

haphazard and unconnected efforts, tremendously laborious and expensive, directed against an inertia that is invincible. It is time, therefore, to seek a method which cannot be condemned by courts, and which will economically and thoroughly achieve the results vainly sought through the label and the boycott.

After the collapse of the Butterick boycott I read some literature concerning the origin and growth of co-operative societies in England, France and Belgium. I will not weary you with statistics, and yet the figures are more eloquent than words could be in presenting the enormous advance made by these societies, until now they are not only retailers whose operations are comparable to those of the greatest merchants, but they are wholesalers and manufacturers as well, who daily increase the scope of their activities. These facts I have pondered long, until now I should like to give you my conception of how we may apply the century of wisdom gained by experience in Europe.

Our problem is to build up our organizations by inducing the consumption of goods made by our members. If while doing this we can at the same time reduce the cost of living for

## CO-OPERATIVE TRADING

ourselves and as many others as will join us, by the partial or total elimination of one of the great factors in swelling that cost, we will have done a work of vital importance for trades unionism and for humanity as well.

Surely any proposition that holds out a promise of such a consummation should be respectfully received and earnestly considered.

My proposal is that a great co-operative society should be formed, to be controlled and directed by the international unions. Individuals should be debarred from holding stock, and also any corporate bodies other than trades unions. The government of the society should be in a board of directors representative of the various unions engaged in the enterprise. The object of a co-operative society is to cheapen the cost of products by eliminating the profits and greatly duplicated running expenses of the middleman. This society would seek the same object, but in addition thereto and of at least equal importance therewith, it would have the object of assuring all union men that the wages they were spending were buying products made by themselves, and that thus they were gaining all the benefits accruing from co-operative trading, plus the even more valuable

## **PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR**

one of building up their organizations and securing employment for themselves.

Consider all possible objections that can be urged against the label and the boycott, and see if they would not be eliminated by the formation of such a society.

1. The goods handled by that society would be union made. Thus every union man could purchase union goods without the physical weariness and vexation of spirit which now attends a search for such articles.

2. No court could find an infringement of anti-trust laws, or an illegal interference with the rights of others, in the operations of such a society.

3. There would be no need for the expenditure of vast sums of money and laborious efforts to advertise a boycott or a label. The plan would be automatic. While a manufacturer employed union labor he could sell his goods to union labor through the society. If he declared an "open shop," that market would be closed to him completely and immediately.

4. The profits from the co-operative trading society would go into the pockets of union men, less expenses of administration, instead of to

## CO-OPERATIVE TRADING

middlemen, who so frequently are avowed or secret enemies.

5. Many persons to whom we now appeal to look for a label or uphold a boycott as a matter of sympathy would in such a case give us their support without solicitation, for the purpose of sharing in the profits.

6. The complaint that label goods are so frequently inferior to other goods at the same price (which is largely true because unscrupulous manufacturers know that the label will sell the goods), will be avoided, because such a society, making enormous purchases, would be in a position to demand proper value for its money.

7. Greatest of all, how thoroughly we would be observing the advice of Rabbi Wise, to "Organize! organize!! organize!!!" Who can conceive of a method more certain to bring men tumbling into the union fold than the fact that their employers must have union men to make things for this tremendous market.

Look what it cost the International Typographical Union in the fight with the Butterick Company! Look at the fight the hatters had to make to save their label! Look at the inferior cigar the blue label of the cigarmakers is com-

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

pelled to cover, because the union can stipulate wages and hours, but not material! Look at the abasement we must suffer in begging middlemen to please give us an opportunity to buy union-made goods, which request is so frequently refused with scorn! Look at the thousands poured into the pockets of lawyers to defend us in court against attempts to put us in jail because we ask each other to refrain from buying non-union products! And then consider that each of these difficulties would melt like snow before the summer sun if a great union co-operative society were in existence.

What are unions but co-operative societies? What human progress was ever attained save as a co-operative measure? When will we learn that the *purchasing power of our wages is a lever to which all our other activities are as naught?*

Sufficient basis for the formulation of a plan can undoubtedly be found in the co-operative societies of Europe. Co-operative banking, co-operative retailing, wholesaling and manufacturing have all emerged from their period of probation. That which is known as the plan of the Rochdale pioneers is the model commonly used in Europe for retailing, and would probably furnish such a society as is here advocated with the essential

## CO-OPERATIVE TRADING

features requisite to success. Such modifications could be made as the varying circumstances might require. For example, the capital necessary for a co-operative store is there furnished by the individual co-operators; in a society such as the one under consideration it would be contributed by the international unions as co-operators, in order to maintain control for the purpose of insuring the marketing of union-made goods exclusively. The dividend-paying feature, based upon the amount of purchases, should certainly be retained, and there is no reason to doubt that it would be as effective in attracting customers as it has proved to be on the other side of the Atlantic.

The American Federation of Labor maintains fraternal relations with the Farmers' Educational and Co-operative Union of America. Suppose there was progress on co-operative lines in both these bodies. Does it not create a thrill to only imagine the co-operative society of producing farmers selling its product to the co-operative society of consuming union men, and vice-versa, with not a middleman anywhere between? Could heaven be much better than that?

I am not dreaming. I do not expect that such a society as this will spring full grown and full armed

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

into the arena of life's struggle. I do not look for the far-reaching results I have described the day after such a society may be organized. I know that this is a vast undertaking, requiring honesty, ability and patience. But I know also that in the army of labor those qualities may be found.

Some may ask me what detailed plan of co-operation I have in mind. My answer will be the same as in the matter of organization by industry: I advocate no plan to the exclusion of any other. Should the international unions of North America adopt this suggestion, able men could study and report on the best manner of carrying it out.

Only this is the point of insistence again: the line of least resistance is the line of co-operation. And no form of co-operation upon which we may enter, no policy which we may adopt, can even faintly compare with the social, political and economic advantages which would be consequent upon this control of the expenditure of our earnings.

## XI. RELATED THINGS

Our survey has hitherto concerned itself with those functions of the union which bear directly upon the upbuilding of the organization and upon the conditions which affect employment. Those who hold to a narrow conception of the purposes and scope of the union will argue that the question, What Shall We Do? has been redundantly answered now.

Men gathered together in that marvelous complex we call society are so inextricably interdependent that only distortion can result from an attempt to fix the status of a man or an association without due consideration of these mutual reactions. This is a truism so obvious that it is sufficiently established by a mere statement. Therefore, the symmetry of our inquiry requires that we shall at least briefly reflect upon the relations of unions and union men to society in those aspects not directly connected with the shop.

To get a living is the first necessity of man; to exercise his proper weight in the government

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

under which he lives is the second; and these two are one. It is idle to say that political institutions have no influence on economic conditions. Hence the union and the individuals who compose it have a vital interest in the politics of their community. How shall that interest find expression?

In my view the question resolves itself into the acceptance of one of two alternatives: Should the unions as organizations and the individuals who compose them segregate themselves into an exclusive political organization; or should they, on the contrary, avoid any semblance of regarding themselves as a class separated in aims and interests from the rest of the community?

Before setting down my own ideas I beg leave to say that in this, above all other matters treated in this essay, I desire not to appear dogmatic. My opinions are sincerely held, and have not been lightly reached; in that spirit they are offered for such consideration as they may deserve. In that spirit I approach the writing of what I find to be the most difficult half dozen pages in the book, and while I do not blench from criticism, I hope that my critics may be free from rancor, for I assure all who may read this that I feel none.

## RELATED THINGS

"Labor" parties having their inception in local central bodies, and seldom growing beyond their confines, are sporadic eruptions mechanically manufactured. Upon rare occasions, as in the campaign made by the United Labor party in New York City in 1886, with Henry George as its candidate for Mayor, such movements become formidable enough to attain temporary importance. Another instance of somewhat similar character, but not so distinctly associated with trades unionism, was the candidacy of William R. Hearst for Mayor of New York City in 1905. In that campaign many unions officially passed resolutions of endorsement, which, though not binding upon members, were so expressive of the feelings of the great majority of them as to meet with hardly any opposition. But the significant fact about all these revolts from customary party affiliations is their evanescent character. Enthusiasm they occasionally develop; vitality never.

Naturally there will spring to every mind in connection with this phase of our discussion, the name of the Socialist party. Here, its members will declare, is a vehicle ready to the hands and peculiarly fitted to the needs of workingmen.

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

The Socialist party has shown unquestionable vitality and growth.

As for the "labor parties" that are born so often and just as often die "a-bornin'," so far as my observation permits me to form an opinion, they are principally the victims of a suspicion which is frequently justified by facts. They are believed to be created and dominated by men who make their positions in the labor movement an asset in their efforts for personal aggrandizement in politics; men who frequently are known to have intimate affiliations with the most corrupt and self-seeking political machines; men who have already been beneficiaries of such machines, or who are shrewdly suspected of being animated by lively ambition to deserve that kind of favor. Such "parties" are commonly believed to be financed by one or the other of the principal parties in the hope of making a diversion from its rival which shall redound to its own benefit. Barring such tremendous and spontaneous movements as those on behalf of Henry George and William R. Hearst, they are regarded with distrust. Whether these suspicions are well founded or not, they are nevertheless so generally harbored

## RELATED THINGS

that such "parties" cannot overcome the handicap saddled upon them by their dubious origin.

But none of this can be said of the Socialist party and of those who compose it. Men may question their wisdom, think slightly of their judgment, but cannot doubt their sincerity. The way of material advancement for the unscrupulous self-seeker does not lie in the public advocacy of Socialist doctrines. Because of this conviction of the truth of its teachings, because of the evident enthusiasm and devotion to principle of its adherents, the Socialist party has shown virility and growth. Numbers have been converted to it, and larger numbers have voted with it, as the most effective available vehicle for the protest they felt impelled to make against existing political and industrial conditions. Entirely disregarding the little "labor" parties, it is worth each individual's while to seriously consider his political duty towards the Socialist party. My own convictions, reached after just such serious consideration, are (1) that individuality is too potent a factor in human nature and development to be submerged to the extent that Socialism would submerge it, and (2) that class consciousness, or voluntary segregation ought to be rejected.

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

It has been said that human beings are like islands, each of whom has in spirit and mentality no point of contact with any other. The conclusions which are here advanced are my own, reached as a result of my own reflections, and to what extent they are valid as the conclusions which should actuate others, each island will decide for himself. Individualism makes itself always and everywhere evident in the desire for exclusive ownership of things. This tendency of human nature has been overemphasized until it has become wolfish, and it would be for the benefit of humanity if the rights of exclusive ownership were modified in respect of some things. It is a natural and proper desire as applied to all things which are the result of human production, which are made by a man himself or are purchased with the fruits of his own labor; it is not a proper desire as applied to that which no man can either add to or subtract from, which is not the work of his hands, and the existence of which is a *sine qua non* before satisfaction of human wants can be attempted. I will not be mysterious: the planet itself as our dwelling place, and the storehouse from which we must obtain subsistence, should be the property of the community. The

## RELATED THINGS

land, the water, the air, and that which may be in the bowels of the earth, should not be the exclusive property of an individual, and the premium which an individual rightly pays for exclusive use of these should be paid to the community for its common fund. But that which a man has constructed or purchased for the purpose of facilitating his use of the planet,—that should be his own as against all the world.

For a long time I mentally debated whether it was my duty to become a party Socialist. This question of what the individual was entitled to exclusive possession of was to me a stumbling block. Then I read "Progress and Poverty" and at once grasped the distinction between what is naturally the common heritage and what is just as naturally the exclusive property of the man who makes or earns it, and I became a convert to the doctrine of land value taxation—more familiarly known as the single tax. That doctrine satisfied both the social and individual instincts within me, and was for me a controlling reason for finally deciding against alliance with the Socialist party. It is mentioned here incidentally in support of my contention that unions ought not to be partisan, and the union man who owns a

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

little home and fancies I wish to use union solidarity to take it from him, may calm his fears and need not chill toward the actions elsewhere urged herein upon trades unionists, for the object of this book is wholly directed toward improvement of union methods of organization and upbuilding, leaving such matters as this for independent consideration. Certainly, I know that if he would examine the subject he would find the compensations of relief from all other direct and indirect tax burdens upon his industry far outweigh the payment to the community of the full rental value of his land—land only, remember. I repeat, however, that it is not my intention to write a disquisition on the single tax, which could not be done in the space assigned to this brief argument, but merely to indicate that the attitude of workingmen generally toward a distinctive workingmen's party is a correct one, viewed from this standpoint of individualism, even though it may not have been careful reasoning that led them to it, and even though they will not at present agree that the right of exclusive ownership should be restricted to things of human production.

Relative to the second conclusion, that class consciousness as a doctrine ought to be rejected,

## RELATED THINGS

I hold that the interests of every unit in a community are inseparable from the interests of all the other units. Not that they are absolutely identical; maladjustments due to violations of the natural law that natural resources ought to be equally free to all men must cause clashes in interest between those who have succeeded in monopolizing natural resources and those who must use them or die. But the line of cleavage is not between employer and employed; it is between monopolizer and user. An illustration may serve to explain this more clearly. Let us suppose a factory located on a river and dependent for power on its flow. If the power site is owned by a person or corporation other than the owner of the factory, is not the employer equally with his employees denied access to and use of the power until they have paid tribute to the owner of the power site? If the factory is run by steam, does not the coal mine owner stand in the same relation to both employer and employee? If a merchant wishes to use a site for business purposes which becomes progressively more valuable, are not the merchant and his customers (among whom workingmen are included) united in interest against the monopolizer of the land, who

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

continuously absorbs the appreciation of site value caused by the energy of the merchant and the presence and purchasing power of the people?

Workingmen as a class feel the injury more keenly because of their poverty than the wealthier merchant or manufacturer, but the difference is one of degree, and not of kind; its influence is exerted against every individual throughout the thousand and one gradations that make up society, for we must all use natural resources for the satisfaction of our wants, the ownership of which is confined to an extremely limited number. For this reason, therefore, it is right that workingmen should not be gathered into an exclusive political organization, for they are not exclusive sufferers from this condition.

Again, the evils that unionism seeks legislative remedies for are not partisan in their nature. The elimination of child labor, the proper sanitation of factories, the enactment of laws assuring reasonable compensation for injuries, can be obtained by the unions as trade organizations. The members of unions could and should act concertedly in such matters, and yet there would remain too many points upon which difference

## RELATED THINGS

in opinion would arise among them to permit the maintenance of a single political organization.

The history of Socialism is itself proof of how questions of opinion or expediency will divide members of a workingmen's party. In the United States there has already been one split, and another is impending. Even the marvelous German Socialist organization has more than once developed formidable differences of opinion which threatened secession. Edward Bernstein, a German Socialist writer of note, has urged important modifications of the Marxian theory, as generally interpreted by Socialists, particularly in regard to an expected class war between an ever diminishing capitalist class and an ever increasing proletariat. Bernstein's Socialism is distinctly progressive, as opposed to the type which looks forward to a collapse of the capitalistic order. He therefore rejects the policy of segregation. Supporting the social growth idea, he favors co-operation with non-socialist efforts that make for socialistic growth. He speaks of

“the march forward of the working classes, who step by step must work out their emancipation by changing society from the domain of a commercial land-holding oligarchy to a real democracy,

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

which in all its departments is guided by the interests of those who work and create."

That rigidity which is commonly attributed to Socialists by those who know no more about them than that they exist, is mythical. The English parliamentary group is frankly opportunist, as Mr. Henry G. Roberts, on a recent visit here, told me in conversation. Victor Berger and his Milwaukee coadjutors are continually under the suspicion of lapsing toward opportunism. Personal friends who are party members have confessed to me that they consider the tendency toward opportunism as irresistible, but that they wish to withstand it as long as possible.

For example, I want the initiative, referendum and recall, and think them tools for our further progress, and am not adverse to acting with any party or persons to get them, feeling myself not tied to any a moment longer than they serve my purpose. The hidebound partisanship the Socialist complains of in the followers of the old parties is notably exemplified in himself; most humorously when he objects to the partial adoption of his program by others as theft.

## RELATED THINGS

I think I can get them, and for the present I care nothing for the party label that helps me get them. That is what I mean when I say that there should not be segregation of workingmen in an exclusive party. Other men not mechanics may agree with me on the desirability of these methods of government; I shall not refuse to agree with them and to travel with them so long as our destinations are identical. We can part when our opinions diverge.

I regard the ideal state of a voting constituency as one in which each voter has a sufficiently independent mind to feel that his opinion on the ruling issue of each election should control his vote in that election, and that partisanship should be as fluid as the changing needs of the community require for the purpose of making effective the will of the community.

This is opportunism, and I am opportunist. To the man who hurls that at me as a reproach I say: You're another—at least sometimes.

The advice which I offer, then, is that the problems of the hour be settled in that hour, thru any medium and in conjunction with any bodies who think similarly.

If this book is favored by finding readers and critics, I expect my Socialist friends (among whom

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

there are many whom I respect and admire) to accuse me of flagrant inconsistency for advocating wider and wider co-operation in my preceding chapters, and now declaring against their propaganda as an entirety. To them I would point out this difference: They seek to capture the machinery of government with the intention of then reorganizing the industrial system. I would induce ever widening co-operation in industry and distribution, and let evolution lead us where it will as regards political institutions. I am confident that the political machinery will conform itself to the needs of the industrial system as those needs are developed. Wider co-operation undoubtedly will tend to unify interests and opinions now more or less diverse, and political parties have always been Protean, bound to assume the form and color of the masses which compose them. A co-operative trading society such as is advocated in a previous chapter would exert political influence as well as economical influence. Should the natural outcome of ever widening co-operation be the formation of a co-operative commonwealth upon the lines laid down by Socialist writers, with the state as the owner of all the means of production, well and

## RELATED THINGS

good. We have so long a road to travel that we need not quarrel now about finalities, even if finalities are possible. But I would extend the same welcome to any other solution that might be evolved, being certain that mankind is on its upward way, stumbling and halting though its progress may be.

The report of President Gompers to the 1911 convention of the American Federation of Labor, under the caption of "Political Changes Affecting Labor," contains a strong indorsement of the initiative and referendum, the recall, direct nominations, and direct election of Senators. The influence of these methods of government upon wage scales may not be apparent, but their influence upon general welfare is obvious. And again the line of cleavage in such matters is not between employers and employed. Workingmen as well as others are divided for and against such propositions, and they will seek political affiliations in accordance with their opinions and independently of their trade associations. These are issues outside the bounds of parties; at least as parties are now constituted. There is in many parts of the country a movement for what are called social centers, which aim to gather the

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

people of a neighborhood together for the discussion of living questions. Schoolhouses are generally utilized as meeting places, and in some sections the school buildings are planned to admit of such use. Trades unionists might well assist such a movement, and it will be a crucible in which all of us, union man and non-union man, employer and employed, professional man and laborer, will give something and receive something, and out of which may come the answer of how unionism will find political expression: not as an army blindly obeying officers, but as individuals led by reasoning to identical conclusions.

To sum up, both benefit and injury come to the great body of citizenship from like causes; hence our position as union men is indivisible from our position as citizens, and political segregation is quite as impossible as segregation in any other relation of life.

## XII. SUMMARY

The aim of trades unionism is the same now as it has always been—to secure mutual protection and advantage by united action. But the problem of trades unionism has changed, and the means whereby such mutual protection and advantage are to be secured must be conformed to the new conditions that have arisen. Rabbi Wise has told us we must more than ever “Organize! Organize! Organize!” Does that mean to induce many persons to become members, and then to regard organization as completed? Let us inquire into the meaning of that word “organization.” Webster defines it as “the act of arranging in a systematic way for use or action.” Such a definition of organization has never been applicable to organized labor. We have never arranged in a systematic way the power inherent in a mass of men for use or action.

There are two ways of satisfying the instinct of self-development—the brutal way of destroying or thrusting aside who and what stands in the

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

way, and the enlightened selfishness which makes others useful to itself by making itself useful to others. It is not a question of the sincerity of a man like William D. Haywood and those who follow him. It may well be that he is filled with a consuming fire which urges him to do and to teach what he does and teaches in the belief and expectation that it is the way—to him the only way—of uplifting and bettering mankind. One may have considerable respect for the character of Danton and yet not approve the methods of the Mountain. Not abuse for the man, not personal hatred, but unqualified opposition to what he preaches, is my stand. It is not a personal devil, but an idea, with which we must contend. Let us not forget that they danced for joy in Paris when Danton was dead and Robespierre was dead. Because then they had won freedom? No; because then they had gained peace and security, even though they were accompanied by a reaction which placed an emperor on the throne of a king; which left them with the same problems of poverty in the midst of plenty which they had shed so much blood to solve. The murderous violence which first attacked the feudal nobles was ere long directed against those whom it was meant

## SUMMARY

to save. It was the people who danced for joy when the Terror had spent itself and the émigrés came trooping back. You will say it rid France of feudalism. True; but it did not solve the problem. Only changed its terms.

Men should be willing to fight. It may well be that unless they are willing to fight, be it to suffer hunger in a strike, or to suffer death in a battle, their efforts were otherwise vain. But that is not the same spirit as the spirit which counsels unceasing strife, war to the death, with no quarter asked and none given. Jack London, in "The Iron Heel," has visualized the gospel of Haywood. After centuries of brutality and misery he pictures life, and light, and peace. But who shall say that that must be the ending? The novelist, omnipotent over the incidents of his book, may choose to make it so. But even if it were, is that game worth the candle if there is another way?

Such a way there is, and the principle of it is a hundred times insisted upon in this book. Vary the terms of the problem as you will, present it in its myriad phases, yet you will always find the solution in peaceful, intelligent co-operation. The Golden Rule is alive in it, for it cannot succeed

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

without mutual helpfulness and consideration, and it cannot fail with them.

And then we have those of the other extreme, who would keep the crafts apart in the industries, and as far as possible keep the individuals apart in the crafts; who want "old fashioned unionism," in these later days of another fashion. To them the sole function of a union is to get more wages, and the sole means of getting more wages is to strike. They do not see that the jacking up of wages is an effort which very soon meets the law of diminishing returns. Wages too low for decent subsistence may be very rapidly advanced by organization, supplemented by the willingness to strike. But wages which have reached a comparatively high standard are only raised by an expenditure of energy out of all proportion to the return, and each succeeding raise requires efforts inversely proportioned to the height which they have already attained. Equally they do not see that to make their wages buy more is just as much a raise of wages as more dollars in the pay envelope. "Keep the union to its proper functions," is their cry. "Anything that can serve us and strengthen us is the proper function of the union," is my answer.

## SUMMARY

It is a *via media* that is here offered between the way of those who aim at revolution and the way of those who will not accept evolution. Under their proper heads are considered plans which are to the advantage of union men as individuals, but which have the much greater merit of complementing each other as aids to the upbuilding of the whole system.

Arbitration agreements will help us turn many ugly corners, and they will not be one-sided agreements when made with a highly organized body that can fight and will fight if denied substantial justice. Let us have as individuals what opinions we may as to the righteousness of the existing industrial system; it will neither be mended nor ended in a day. But while we strive for betterment, for progress, let us wisely recognize that we must all live on this footstool, and let us make the terms of living no harsher than the needs of progress compel.

What shall be done to lift up unskilled labor and that skilled labor which, by reason of ignorance of the language and lack of education, is so pre-eminently marked for exploitation, will give us much to reflect upon. Yet I believe that organization by industry will greatly alleviate

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

their case. An aristocracy of labor which holds itself aloof from the humbler toiler is in no wise different from an aristocracy of birth or wealth which holds itself superior to the artisan. Industrial organization must bring into its fold all employed in a certain line of production, must give them better knowledge of each other, must induce co-operation among them. And all this must tend to greater diffusion of benefit, instead of the narrow prosperity of a comparative few, based on the degradation of the many.

Insurance benefits have been sufficiently considered. Their need is obvious and their practicability assured. Such benefits will keep the wolf of starvation out of many a home, even if they cannot prevent him from barking at the door. As a means of binding us together and making a union card a valuable asset, it is difficult to overestimate their usefulness.

We should not be blind to the fact that against us organization is being highly perfected. Even strike-breaking is now an organized industry. Furthermore, whether it sounds like heresy or not, a strike breaker has a right to work in our places if he wants to, and the way to stop him is not with a club, for he has anticipated us in that

## SUMMARY

respect and has secured a license to use a gun. But we will stop him much more effectively if we let both him and his product severely alone. For that reason I believe the co-operative trading society is infinitely the most important suggestion offered, and the adoption of it alone is worth more than the adoption of all the others without it. Its effects will be far broader and deeper than the confines of trades unionism. If it was successful at all it would bring into closer relation vast numbers of persons who have now no direct connection with trades unionism and only distorted notions of trades unionists. Men and women not employed in trades, attracted at first by the purely mercenary considerations of saving for themselves the extortionate cost of supplying necessities through an army of unnecessary middlemen, would come to know that the existence of trades unionism is of vital benefit to society, as a force which combats, and sometimes combats alone, a greed that might otherwise find no check. They would learn that its efforts for high wages widely diffused and liberally spent add to general welfare and prosperity. So learning, they would no longer view the trades unionist as a disturber and unconscionable grafter,

## PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

but as one who is the exemplar of a limited altruism which can be made to include themselves when they are ready to apply his maxims. And on the other hand, contact and mutual labor for the co-operative society in which both are interested would give the unionist a clearer conception of the fact that those whom he now so frequently despises as sycophantic counter jumpers and clerks are very much as he is himself, working under like conditions, confronted by similar problems, and with no other means of solving them. Both kinds of people would find their mutual prejudices dissolving before the more and more clear perception that there is nothing but their prejudices separating them. Such co-operation would assist in the establishment of real democracy, for community of interest and better acquaintance must tend to much greater uniformity of opinion as to political expression; as regards essentials, at least. And this is true of union men as well as of those who are employed in occupations that know no unionism as yet. Their unionism is far too contracted in scope to bring forth the fruit that true unionism would bear. In the chapter devoted to this subject

## SUMMARY

its direct and immediate advantages are sufficiently dilated upon; less superficial, but in the end of transcendent importance, are the advantages which must follow closer acquaintance and better understanding of our mutual interdependence.

Do I hear sneers and note signs of ridicule? Little souls, darkened souls, complacent souls, mine it is to look down on you, not you on me! For I stand upon a great height and can see far and wide. I do not give up hope of seeing with mine own eyes at least an approach to the Land of Promise. For men's minds are strangely moved in these days, and it may be that great things are impending. Surely the time is fast ripening. But if it be not yet, nor even soon, then nevertheless it is given to me to know that along some such road as this, under some such banner as this, the army of advancing mankind shall march. And the words that are me shall live when the dust that was me hath moldered.

What Shall We Do? is a pregnant question which must be answered. I have prayed for wisdom to find the truth and for the power of language to impart it. To me this little book

## **PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR**

has been a solemn work. Of the reader I ask an open mind, and to my last conscious moment I will thank Him who gave me the faculty to write the book if from it there shall spring aught of advantage to the cause of organized labor.

**THE END**

## INDEX

	PAGE
A. F. of L. ....	22, 72, 90, 101, 117
American, Strike on Chicago.....	35 <i>et seq.</i>
Apprentice, The.....	76 <i>et seq.</i>
Arbitration.....	42 <i>et seq.</i>
compulsory.....	45
in cloak industry.....	46
in printing industry.....	47
in Germany.....	48 <i>et seq.</i>
Assessments for insurance benefits, Percentage plan of..	60 <i>et seq.</i>
Backward, A Glance.....	4
Benefits, Insurance.....	55 <i>et seq.</i>
against death.....	58 <i>et seq.</i>
"    sickness.....	58 <i>et seq.</i>
"    unemployment.....	55, 64, 73
of Cigarmakers' International Union.....	61 <i>et seq.</i>
of International Typographical Union.....	62 <i>et seq.</i>
old age pensions.....	65 <i>et seq.</i>
percentage plan of assessments for.....	60 <i>et seq.</i>
Berger, Victor.....	113
Bernstein, Edward.....	113
Berry, President, International Union of Printing Press-	
men.....	37 <i>et seq.</i>
Boycott, The.....	32, 88 <i>et seq.</i>
Buck Stove and Range Company, boycott on.....	90
Butterick Company, boycott on.....	90
By Way of Explanation.....	28 <i>et seq.</i>
C. G. T. (Confédération Générale du Travail)....	19 <i>et seq.</i> , 33
Cherouny, Henry W.....	48
Chicago American, strike on.....	35 <i>et seq.</i>

## INDEX

	PAGE
Cigarmakers' International Union.....	61 <i>et seq.</i> , 95, 99
insurance against death.....	58 <i>et seq.</i>
"          "    sickness.....	58 <i>et seq.</i>
"          "    unemployment.....	55, 64, 73
label of.....	95, 99
Cloak industry, arbitration in.....	46
Compulsory arbitration.....	45
Co-operative Trading.....	84 <i>et seq.</i> , 125
boycott, the.....	32, 88 <i>et seq.</i>
high cost of living, the.....	86 <i>et seq.</i>
label, the.....	32, 88 <i>et seq.</i>
Rochdale pioneers.....	100
Direct Action.....	6, 14 <i>et seq.</i>
Explanation, By Way of.....	23 <i>et seq.</i>
Farmers' Educational and Co-operative Union of America	101
Freel, President, International Stereotypers' Union.....	37
General Strike.....	15 <i>et seq.</i>
George, Henry.....	106
Glance Backward, A.....	4
Golden Rule.....	121
Gompers, President, A. F. of L.....	117
Harvester Company, International, pension plan of....	69
Haywood, William D.....	120
Hearst, William R.....	105, 106
High cost of living.....	86 <i>et seq.</i>
Howard, Judge.....	87
Initiative, referendum and recall.....	114, 115
Injunctions, writs of, in strikes.....	7
Insurance Benefits.....	55 <i>et seq.</i>
against death.....	58 <i>et seq.</i>
"          sickness.....	58 <i>et seq.</i>
"          unemployment.....	55, 64, 73
of Cigarmakers' International Union.....	61 <i>et seq.</i>

# INDEX

	PAGE
Insurance of International Typographical Union.....	62 <i>et seq.</i>
old age pensions.....	65 <i>et seq.</i>
percentage plan of assessments for.....	60 <i>et seq.</i>
International Harvester Company, pension plan of.....	69
International Unions—	
Cigarmakers'.....	55 <i>et seq.</i> , 95, 99
insurance against death.....	58 <i>et seq.</i>
“            “    sickness.....	58 <i>et seq.</i>
“            “    unemployment.....	55, 64, 73
label of.....	95, 99
Printing Pressmen.....	37 <i>et seq.</i>
President Berry.....	37 <i>et seq.</i>
Stereotypers'.....	37 <i>et seq.</i>
President Freel.....	37 <i>et seq.</i>
Typographical.....	37, 47, 62 <i>et seq.</i> , 90
boycott on Butterick Company.....	90
insurance benefits of.....	62 <i>et seq.</i>
old age pension plan of.....	72
President Lynch.....	37 <i>et seq.</i>
strike on Chicago American.....	35 <i>et seq.</i>
Iron Heel, The.....	121 <i>et seq.</i>
Irritation Strike.....	15 <i>et seq.</i>
I. W. W. (Industrial Workers of the World), 21 <i>et seq.</i> , 33,	
42, 45, 119 <i>et seq.</i>	
C. G. T.....	19 <i>et seq.</i> , 33
general strike.....	15 <i>et seq.</i>
Haywood, William D.....	120
irritation strike.....	15 <i>et seq.</i>
Sabotage.....	17 <i>et seq.</i>
Sorel, George.....	20, 24
Label, The.....	32, 88 <i>et seq.</i>
Labor parties.....	105 <i>et seq.</i>
Labor, unskilled.....	23, 24, 123
Lawrence, strike at.....	12
Life insurance.....	58 <i>et seq.</i>
Limoges, meeting at.....	19

## INDEX

	PAGE
London, Jack .....	121
Los Angeles outrage .....	2, 11
Lynch, President, International Typographical Union..	37 <i>et seq.</i>
McNamaras .....	1, 6, 11
Mazzini, Words of .....	2
Nantes, meeting at .....	18
Newspaper Publishers Association of North America...	35, 47
Old age pensions .....	65 <i>et seq.</i>
Opportunism .....	115
Organization by Industry .....	23, 33 <i>et seq.</i> , 42 <i>et seq.</i>
Organization, Definition of .....	119
Parties, labor .....	105 <i>et seq.</i>
Pensions, old age .....	65 <i>et seq.</i>
plan of International Harvester Co. ....	69
"    International Typographical Union .....	72
"    U. S. Steel Corporation .....	68, 69
Picket line .....	7 <i>et seq.</i>
Pressmen, International Union of Printing .....	37
President Berry, of .....	37
strike on Chicago American .....	35 <i>et seq.</i>
Printing industry, arbitration in .....	47
in Germany, arbitration in .....	48 <i>et seq.</i>
"Progress and Poverty" .....	109
Rabbi Stephen S. Wise .....	21, 99, 119
Related Things .....	103 <i>et seq.</i>
Roberts, Henry G. ....	114
Rochdale pioneers .....	100
"Romance of Words" .....	17
Sabotage .....	17 <i>et seq.</i>
Schoolhouses as social centers .....	118
Sickness, insurance against .....	58 <i>et seq.</i>
Single tax .....	109 <i>et seq.</i>
Social centers, schoolhouses as .....	118

# INDEX

	PAGE
Socialism.....	14, 15, 106 <i>et seq.</i>
Berger, Victor.....	114
Bernstein, Edward.....	113
Roberts, Henry G.....	114
Sorel, George.....	20, 24
Steffens, Lincoln.....	2
Stereotypers, International Union.....	37
President Freel, of.....	37
strike on Chicago American.....	35 <i>et seq.</i>
Strike, The.....	5, 12, 15 <i>et seq.</i> , 29, 35 <i>et seq.</i> , 51 <i>et seq.</i>
at Lawrence.....	12
general.....	15 <i>et seq.</i>
irritation.....	15 <i>et seq.</i>
on Chicago American.....	35 <i>et seq.</i>
Strikes, picket line in.....	7 <i>et seq.</i>
violence in.....	7 <i>et seq.</i>
writs of injunction in.....	7
Summary.....	119 <i>et seq.</i>
Syndicalism.....	6, 14 <i>et seq.</i> , 41, 42, 119 <i>et seq.</i>
C. G. T.....	19 <i>et seq.</i> , 33
general strike.....	15 <i>et seq.</i>
Haywood, William D.....	120
history of, in France.....	18 <i>et seq.</i>
irritation strike.....	15 <i>et seq.</i>
"Iron Heel, The".....	121
I. W. W.....	6, 21 <i>et seq.</i> , 33, 42, 45, 119 <i>et seq.</i>
London, Jack.....	121
organization by industry.....	23, 41
sabotage.....	17 <i>et seq.</i>
Sorel, George.....	20, 24
syndicats jaunes.....	18 <i>et seq.</i>
"          rouges.....	18 <i>et seq.</i>
Taft, President.....	2
Trading, Co-operative.....	84 <i>et seq.</i> , 125
boycott, the.....	32, 88 <i>et seq.</i>
high cost of living.....	86 <i>et seq.</i>

## INDEX

	PAGE
Trading label, the .....	32, 88 <i>et seq.</i>
Rochdale pioneers .....	100
Typographical Union, International.....	37, 47, 62 <i>et seq.</i>
boycott on Butterick Company.....	90 <i>et seq.</i>
insurance benefits of.....	62 <i>et seq.</i>
President Lynch of.....	37 <i>et seq.</i>
strike on Chicago American.....	35 <i>et seq.</i>
Unemployment, insurance against.....	55, 64, 73
Union, function of the.....	31, 122
United States Steel Corporation, pension plan of.....	68 <i>et seq.</i>
Unskilled labor.....	23, 24, 123
Violence in strikes.....	7 <i>et seq.</i>
Webster's definition of "organization".....	119
Weekley, Ernest.....	17
What Shall We Do?.....	1
Wise, Rabbi Stephen S.....	21, 99, 119
Words of Mazzini.....	2

[ 134 ]

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